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ESSAY  
ON THE  
ELEUSINIAN  
Mysteries,



London,  
Printed for Rodwell and Martin  
New Bond Street,  
1817.



**ESSAY**  
**ON THE**  
**MYSTERIES OF ELEUSIS;**

**BY**  
**M. OUVAROFF,**

COUNSELLOR OF STATE TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE  
EMPEROR OF RUSSIA;  
CURATOR OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
SAINT PETERSBURG;  
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES,  
AND OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN THAT CITY;  
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF  
GOTTINGEN, &c.

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*Ὁλβιος, ὃς τὰδ' ὅπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων.*

HOMER. Hymn. in Cer. v. 48

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

By J. D. PRICE.

—◆—  
**With Observations,**

By J. CHRISTIE.

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LONDON:  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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OF M. Ouvaroff's "*Essai sur les Mystères d'Eleusis*," the third edition appeared in June, 1816, at Paris, and has been used by the English translator; because some slight errors in the former editions are here corrected by M. De Sacy, who, in a short advertisement, informs us, that, conjointly with M. Boissonade, celebrated for his erudition in Greek literature, he had revised the proof sheets, and added two or three notes. We learn also, with pleasure, from this advertisement, that M. de Sacy, in compliance with the request of his deceased friend M. de Sainte Croix, was preparing to publish a second edition of the admirable "*Recherches sur les Mystères du Paganisme*" occasionally quoted in M. Ouvaroff's *Essay*.





# PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION,

PUBLISHED IN 1812.

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THE honour of being associated, in 1811, to the Royal Society of Gottingen, inspired me with the design of writing on certain points of antiquity, which had long engaged my attention. There is, without doubt, some temerity in thus choosing a difficult subject, which, perhaps, has been supposed exhausted, and which a person can now scarcely discuss without endeavouring, as the celebrated Heyne has observed, to establish some favourite hypothesis. My object in this work is to show, that not only were the ancient mysteries the very life of polytheism; but still more, that they proceeded from the sole and true source

of all the light diffused over the globe. If these conjectures should serve as materials towards a history of polytheism, if they prove the necessity of giving a new incitement to the study of antiquities, I shall have attained my object.

Men of letters have generally chosen for the discussion of such subjects, one common language; and the Latin was for a long time the interpreter of antiquity. But since it has lost the ancient privilege of universality, the French has appropriated a great portion of its rights: the justness and clearness which characterise it, seem, in fact, to qualify this language for becoming the habitual idiom of a science in which a perspicuous arrangement of ideas, and propriety of expression, are almost as necessary as a spirit of analysis and of criticism. These considerations have influenced me: but I feel the necessity of indulgence for having undertaken to write in a foreign language: one which presents, above all others, so many difficulties to strangers employing it.

These are not the only obstacles that op-

posed me. It is well known that, notwithstanding the researches of Meursius, of Warburton, Bougainville, Meiners, Stark, Bach, Vogel, and Tiedemann; that notwithstanding the learned work of M. de Sainte Croix, the great question respecting the Mysteries is still far from being solved. Original testimonies are very few: and they have not hitherto been classed with the precaution indispensable towards tracing the historical date, and in determining the intrinsic value of each authority. This confusion, which Meiners has already noticed, contributes to darken a subject, eminently obscure in itself. I only mention these difficulties as an excuse for not having approached more near to my object.

I now gladly pay a tribute of acknowledgement to the Privy Counsellor Olenin, who kindly superintended for me the execution of those vignettes which ornament this Essay. To the State Counsellor Kœhler, I am indebted for the gem represented in the title page\*.

\* An explanation of the engravings will be found immediately after the Notes, which follow this Essay.

The Greek verse which I have chosen as a motto, has been adopted by Wolf, and rejected by Hermann, two great authorities of equal weight.

*Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.*

Besides, I am not here discussing the merits or authenticity of this passage from the Hymn to Ceres; but merely its direct relation with the subject of my work.

I shall add but one reflection: the study of antiquities is not an isolated study; whenever it raises itself above the dead letter, this noble science becomes the history of the human mind. Not only does it adapt itself to all ages, and all situations of life, but it opens so wide a field, that thought willingly fixes on it, and is for a moment abstracted from the cares and disasters attending great political and moral commotions. Seneca\*, has admirably described the destination of a man of letters during such stormy epochs, and thus con-

\* Seneca, de Otio Sap. 31.

cludes : “ *Duas respublicas animo contemplamur : alteram magnam et vere publicam, qua dii atque homines continentur ; in qua non ad hunc angulum respicimus, aut ad illum, sed terminos civitatis nostræ cum sole metimur ; alteram, cui nos adscripsit conditio nascendi——Quidam eodem tempore utrique reipublicæ dant operam, majori minori que ; quidam tantum minori, quidam tantum majori. Huic majori reipublicæ, et in otio deservire possumus ; immo vero nescio an in otio melius.*”

# PREFACE

TO THE

## SECOND EDITION.

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OF this Essay, the first edition, which did not extend beyond one hundred copies, appeared early in the year 1812; at a moment when the general attention was absorbed by events of great public interest; for on them depended the fate of Europe. At an epoch so unfavourable to literature, it seemed probable that a work of this nature, composed in a region bordering on the pole, would have continued long almost unknown.

Some copies, however, found their way into distant countries, and I had the satisfaction of learning from different journals the opinions of many distinguished scholars respecting it. This encouraged me to retouch

my work ; and I resolved to collect all that could extend and enrich it, without swelling it beyond the limits originally prescribed.

An epoch has at length arrived favourable to the publication of a new edition : after twenty years of misfortunes and of faults, Europe has been liberated. The republic of letters will speedily emerge from amidst ruins, and flourish once more, in place of the most odious tyranny that ever existed. She will resume, undoubtedly, her ancient rights, of which the most precious is that fraternity of sentiments attracting towards one central point such a multiplicity of men scattered on the surface of the globe.

I have not neglected any thing that could improve this work. The quotations have been carefully revised ; the style corrected in several places ; and some important additions made throughout the course of these pages. Two new sections are annexed ; the fifth, in which the system of Euhemerus, and its relation with the doctrine of the Mysteries, are examined ; and the sixth, of which the object is to recon-



cile the secret worship of Ceres with that of Bacchus. The manner in which I have treated this question seems to me perfectly new; and whatever the learned world may pronounce concerning it, I must bear alone the whole responsibility.

I have frequently been reproached for the adoption, with too ready faith, of the explanation given by Wilford, of some sacred Eleusinian words. I am perfectly aware of the distrust inspired by the discoveries of this ingenious but bold writer; and far from regarding his explanation as a basis indispensably necessary to my hypothesis, I would have abandoned it to the incredulity of European readers, if I had found, against Wilford's conjecture, either critical arguments or grammatical observations of any weight. No one has opposed this conjecture with the arms of criticism; and in philology suspicions avail but little. I thought also, that English men of letters in general, and the Society of Calcutta in particular, would not have allowed a manifest imposture to subsist so long; and that

Wilford, who so frankly and publicly acknowledged the cheat by which his Pandits had deceived him, would himself have hastened to disavow this remarkable explanation, if he had any reason to doubt its proofs. On this subject I have consulted my illustrious friend, Sir Gore Ouseley, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary from the King of England to the court of Persia, and member of the Asiatic Society; one to whom a long residence in India and Persia has rendered familiar all the treasures of the human mind. His judgment has confirmed me in the opinion, that an affinity more than accidental existed between the Sanscrit words quoted by Wilford and the sacred terms of Eleusis. With the assistance of Sir Gore Ouseley, I have offered some illustrative remarks on the words *Konx* and *Pax*, in a note placed at the end of this work. As to the monosyllable *Om*, or rather *Oum*, every testimony conspires to prove it the most abstract and most mystical of Indian symbols.

I am, however, willing to renounce any advantage that might arise from this explana-

tion, without any fear of thereby weakening the basis of my hypothesis, respecting the Mysteries of Eleusis: an hypothesis, which rests, in all cases, less upon the exact knowledge of what was taught at the Mysteries, than upon the certainty of that which was not taught. If we can only succeed in ascertaining satisfactorily the high destination of the Mysteries, their religious and historical importance, and the source from which they issued, we may leave their Indian extraction a doubtful point, and content ourselves with having marked the direct relations between the first glimmerings of the ancient mystagogy, traced back to its true origin, and the last systems of Grecian philosophy. M. Chardon de la Rochette, whose literary career death has lately terminated, informs us in his valuable Miscellany \*, that M. Silvéstre de Sacy had undertaken a new edition of M. de Sainte Croix's Researches on the Mysteries. Every friend of literature must anxiously wish to see this work freed from the interpolations of an

\* *Mélang. de Critiq. et de Philol.* t. iii. p. 44.

editor \*, who at once abused the confidence of friendship and the rights of an immense share of erudition. M. Silvéstre de Sacy, will better fulfil the intentions of M. de Sainte Croix—he will erect to the memory of his learned friend a literary monument worthy of the one and of the other.

*Arcades ambo,  
Et cantare pares, et respondere parati.*

Saint-Petersburg,  
January, 1815.

OUVAROFF.

\* M. de Villoison. See the *Melanges* of M. Chardon de la Rochette, t. iii. p. 35. M. Dacier, in his *Eloge* on M. de Sainte Croix, *Moniteur*, 1811, No. 188, and the *Mercure* of May 18, 1805, p. 414.





## ESSAY

ON THE

# Eleusinian Mysteries.

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### SECTION I.

THE study of antiquity offers nothing more interesting nor more obscure than the mysteries in use among the ancients. This subject has long exercised the sagacity of various critics, and the ingenuity of many learned men. It is, in fact, evident,

that a profound knowledge, not of the ceremonies, but of the source and spirit of the mysteries, considered as the true depository of religious ideas as they existed among the ancients, would cast a light altogether new upon antiquity. From Meursius to St<sup>e</sup> Croix and Meiners, numerous men of letters have examined the question under different aspects; some endeavouring to ascertain the origin and design of the mysteries; others to fix the epoch of their introduction into Greece, and to collect all the testimonies which the ancients have left respecting the ceremonies practised during their celebration. We must allow that learned researches have already been made; all that could illustrate the subject, whether in the writings of ancient authors or in the monuments of art, has been brought together and examined with considerable attention; yet the most important of these researches, that of the religious and philosophical re-

lations subsisting between the mysteries and polytheism, does not appear to have been hitherto made with all the care of which it is susceptible. By various writers it has been totally neglected; many have only treated of it incidentally; some have regarded the mysteries as ceremonies merely designed to deceive the vulgar; others have exalted them into schools of philosophy. Pluche transformed them into a course of salutary influences\*, and Larcher believed that they inculcated atheism†.

To embrace the whole extent of this question, that tends to make known all the elements of the ancient moral world, a variety of materials which we now want, and which we never shall possess, would

\* Histoire du Ciel, tom. i. p. 371.

† Herodotus, in the translation of Larcher, l. viii. sect. 65. But in the second edition of his work, M. Larcher declares, that the perusal of M. de St<sup>e</sup> Croix's Essay, (entitled "*Recherches sur les Mystères du Paganisme*," ) had induced him to abandon this opinion.



be absolutely necessary. We do not, therefore, flatter ourselves on having illustrated the subject ; but offer the ideas contained in this Essay as simple conjectures, proceeding rather from a desire of instructing ourselves, than from any presumptuous notion of being able to instruct others.

Before we proceed further, it will be expedient to determine the idea generally formed of the mysteries. Under this name has been comprehended a multiplicity of religious institutions, very different one from another, and not derived from any common origin. Thus among the number of mysteries we find reckoned the ceremonies of the Dactyli, of the Curetes, the Corybantes, the Telchines, &c. and the more modern initiations of Mithras and of Isis. A serious study of this branch of antiquity seems, however, to prove, that there was scarcely any relation between these religious sects and the mysteries of *Ceres* celebrated at Eleusis. Even the

analogy which subsisted between the mysteries of the Dii Cabiri in Samothrace and those of Eleusis has not been determined <sup>1</sup>.

Amidst all the institutions which have been denominated mysteries, those of Eleusis hold the highest rank, equally imposing from their origin and their results: they alone appear in relation with the primitive source of religious ideas; they alone formed the mysticism of polytheism. Never did the ancients by the name of mysteries understand any other than the Eleusinian. The rest, with a few exceptions, were nothing more originally than the mysterious practices of barbarian jugglers, the object of whose mission was accomplished in the deception of a credulous people at that time in a half savage state; and afterwards they were the tricks of expert mountebanks, who believed it in their power, by the help of obscure and foreign ceremonies,

to save from falling a religion which mouldered away on every side. It has also been usual to class among the institutions called mysteries, those of Bacchus, which, though very interesting to develop, throw but little light on the question now before us. The Bacchic or Orphic mysteries bear a character wholly opposite to the Eleusinian. For it may be affirmed, that between the worship of Bacchus and that of Ceres, the same difference existed as between the unbridled force of savage life, and the civilization of well regulated society<sup>2</sup>. But the mysteries of Ceres are principally distinguished from all others, as having been the depositories of certain traditions coeval with the world. Besides, in discovering a point of mediation between man and the Divinity, those of Eleusis had alone attained the object of every great religious association. All Greece hastened to be initiated; and Plato, who had penetrated into the secrets

of the sanctuary, did not speak of them without admiration. ‘The knowledge of nature,’ says St. Clemens of Alexandria, ‘is taught in the *great mysteries*\*.’ If it were possible to lift the veil which covers the mysteries of Eleusis, we should possess a key to the mysteries of Egypt and of the East; a clue, which, having once been found, would lead on to the last moments of polytheism.

The time when the mysteries of Eleusis were founded is equally uncertain as the name of their founder. Tertullian attributes them to Musæus†. St Epiphany to Cadmus and Inachus‡; while Clemens of Alexandria informs us, that the mysteries were traced to an Egyptian named Melampus§. Some (as the scholiast of Sophocles) declare that one Eumolpus was

\* Stromat. v. cap. 11. p. 689.

† Apologet. cap. 21.

‡ Adv. Hær. i. § 9. tom. i. ed. Petav.

§ Coh. ad Gentes, p. 12.

the founder and first Hierophant of the mysteries\* ; and others believe that Orpheus introduced them from Egypt into Greece. The writers however most worthy of credit ascribe to Ceres herself the foundation of the Eleusinian mysteries <sup>3</sup>. We shall not here repeat the different fables that have been told concerning the manner in which Ceres established these mysteries. By attributing them to the goddess or to Earth, the epoch of their foundation was removed beyond the bounds of history, and the impossibility of ascertaining it was acknowledged.

An uncertainty still more great hangs over the year of their institution ; those who have discussed this subject offering various opinions, all equally deficient in proofs and even in the appearance of probability. Meiners and Dupuis have already shown that this research is no less frivolous than useless <sup>4</sup>. In support of

\* Ad Œdip. Col. v. 1108.

the assertion here made, we shall observe, that the *lesser* mysteries having undoubtedly preceded the *great*, the epoch of their true developement should be that of the organization of the Grecian republics. It is, therefore, infinitely more interesting to study the mysteries in their maturity than in their infancy\*. We may remark also, that however remote the date of their transmigration from Egypt, however symbolical the name of Ceres, the mysteries must have been anterior to the epoch which has been assigned for their foundation, if we consent to place the germ of them in the festivals and popular practices of those who first inhabited Greece, and who, like them, had issued from the East†. The religion of the Greeks was not formed without successive acquisitions; and of their worship and of their ceremonies much had been transmitted to them by

\* Meiners, *Verm. Phil. Schrift.* iii. p. 258.

† Meiners, *Verm. Phil. Schrift.* iii. p. 248—251.

the Egyptians\*. The mysteries of Ceres, according to Lactantius, very strongly resemble those of Isis†. The Attic Ceres is the same as the Egyptian Isis‡, who, in the time of Herodotus, was the only divinity in Egypt honoured by the celebration of mysteries. From these, therefore, we may partly derive the mysteries of Ceres§: but this depository of ideas can have developed itself but slowly; and it was late in assuming those mystic forms which always announce a certain maturity of thought. In this we clearly see the ordinary progress of the human mind, that departs from the idea of infinitude, and ranges through an immense space ere it resumes its station before this same idea, which seems to embrace the two extremities of its career.

\* Herodot. l. ii. cap. 49.

† Lactant. de Falsa Relig. p. 119, § 21.

‡ Herodot. l. ii. cap. 59.

§ Meiners, Comment. Soc. Reg. Gotting. tom. xvi. p. 234, et seqq.

This consideration may serve also to throw some light on a difficulty much more considerable, and which presents itself on the first view.

We may consider it as an indisputable circumstance, that the poems of Homer are the most ancient documents of Grecian history<sup>5</sup>; but neither are the mysteries once mentioned in them, nor does Homer any where indicate a vestige of mystic ideas<sup>6</sup>. He never even rises to that abstract notion of destiny which constituted the soul of Grecian tragedy. His theology is anterior to all metaphysical combinations. Every thing in Homer bears the true character of primitive poetry, the musical harmony of words, the charm of first impressions. Never has there been offered to the human mind a more enchanting picture of its youth. We discover throughout, in the simplicity of Homeric ideas, the germ of a dormant power; as we anticipate, while contem-



plating infantine grace, the vigorous proportions of maturity.

These qualities, which at all times have rendered Homer so dear to enlightened nations, present an historic difficulty, almost inexplicable, to him who discusses the subject of ancient mysteries. We have noticed how much uncertainty pervades those of Eleusis. The most authentic testimonies agree in referring the epoch of their foundation even to the remote fabulous ages: yet by Homer, the first historian of the Greeks, they are not any where mentioned; nay, his work bespeaks an order of ideas wholly opposite. It would be vain to suppose that taste in his time was so delicate, and the rules of composition so well determined, that the poet might have purposely banished from the *Epoëa* every metaphysical idea or allusion. And this supposition appears so much the more frivolous, as a line of demarcation drawn about the *Epoëa* is

neither in the genius of Homer, nor of the period in which he flourished. Whatever idea may have been attached in that age to the Epopea, Homer did not servilely restrain himself within the boundaries of one kind. He embraces his own time; he embraces nature.

A representation of the ancient mysteries may not have belonged to his subject. Still we could not fail to discover in his works some traces of metaphysical ideas, if such had existed in his time. One evidence of great weight, (and which equally proves that the mysteries of Greece, by whomsoever founded, or at whatever epoch, are truly posterior to the age of Homer,) is afforded by Herodotus, who declares that Homer and Hesiod first gave to the Greeks their Theogonies, and that these poets were the first who determined the names, the worship, and the images of the gods \*. This assertion must not,

\* Herodot. l. ii. cap. 53.

however, be taken literally. It is manifest that, in the actions assigned by Homer to the gods, a system already known is presupposed. But Homer and Hesiod have regulated and combined a multiplicity of scattered traditions, of isolated *myths* (μύθοι); and in this respect have exercised the functions ascribed to them by Herodotus in that remarkable passage to which a reference has been made above, and of which the authority has been warmly disputed, especially by those writers who have endeavoured to demonstrate the existence of Orpheus, and to prove him the founder of the mysteries. It is certain that Orpheus in a considerable degree influenced the religious ideas of the Greeks; and this circumstance we must allow would not be the less true, even were we to adopt the opinion of Aristotle, who, as Cicero informs us, maintained that Orpheus never existed \*. For if the name

\* Cic. de Nat. Deor. i. cap. 38.

of Orpheus be only a collective denomination of all those who founded or reformed the mysteries, the actions ascribed to him, (such as the foundation of the Samothracian or the Bacchic mysteries\*,) are nevertheless real and historic facts. Orpheus was in other respects but little known in antiquity. The most ingenious critics have protested against the fragments transmitted under his name †. But between the mysteries of Samothrace attributed to him, and some Egyptian ceremonies, such conformity appears as serves to confirm the general opinion respecting a journey made by Orpheus into Egypt. From the earliest times the Egyptians exercised almost a monopoly of eastern ideas; to reconcile therefore the transmigration of the Egyptian mysteries with the silence of Homer and of Hesiod, it is necessary to place the epoch of the developement of those rites imported from

\* Diod. l. i. cap. 96.—Apollod. i. cap. 38.

the East, after the age of Homer, or at least of the Trojan war; for this event had happened before Greece, from the midst of civil dissensions, began to organise herself into regular governments. The heroic age offers still that political uncertainty which nature places between the nomadic or erratic life and the rigorous division of casts; an uncertainty whereby the dignity and energy of man are unfolded, but by which he is not inspired with the necessity of re-entering within himself.

It appears then, that we may date the true increase or growth of the mysteries at that period when the principal republics of Greece were founded.

The republican æra had succeeded to the heroic age at the same time that lyric and dramatic poetry replaced the Epopea; and since among the ancients all the elements of the moral and physical existence of nations were intimately connected, He-

siod may be considered as intermediate between these two grand epochs. Religious notions had already advanced in a manner more analogous to the deportment of society ; and as it is impossible to believe that Grecian poetry could without gradual improvement have attained Homeric perfection, so it can scarcely be proved that the mysteries acquired all their extent in a spontaneous and arbitrary manner, at a time when nothing indicates such a necessity. Transplanted institutions cannot flourish, unless identified by a considerable lapse of time with the soil which received them ; and before we adopt the opinions of chronologers, who undertake to ascertain the date of a great event in antiquity ; let us consult the philosopher, who calculates whether this event be in accordance with the immutable laws of nature, which men can neither modify nor destroy.

## SECTION II.



It is probable that, of all the European countries, Greece was the first peopled by Asiatic colonies. Its whole history proves, that at various periods it was inhabited by three different races. The first colonists, not forming a national body, are not designated under a generical name. The second colony was Pelasgian, less strangers to civilization. The Pelasgians seem to have had an affinity with the Thracians of Europe and the Phrygians of Asia : yet it was implied by the tradition of Dodona, that they had a long time sacrificed to the gods, although ignorant of their names\*.

\* Herod. l. ii. cap. 52.

A great change was produced by the deluge of Deucalion, which happened about the year 1514 before Christ. A new race appeared; the Hellenes, having issued from Asia, spread themselves over Greece, drove out the Pelasgians or formed alliances with them, and bestowed their name on the country which they civilized\*. About sixty years after Deucalion's deluge, the Phœnician Cadmus established himself at Thebes, and the Egyptian Danaüs at Argos.

Such is the summary of facts, half fabulous half historical, which are collected with some difficulty in the works of ancient writers, and which have given rise to a multiplicity of different systems. But, in the midst of contradictory hypotheses, it remains indisputable that Greece was peopled by Asiatic colonies, more or less civilized, and at different epochs.

Of the Eleusinian mysteries, we have

\* *Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* tom. xxiii. p. 115, &c.



seen that the foundation was attributed either to the goddess herself or to foreign colonists, and that the Egyptian priests claimed the honour of having transmitted to the Greeks the first elements of polytheism. These positive facts would sufficiently prove, even without the conformity of ideas, that the mysteries transplanted into Greece, and there united with a certain number of local notions, never lost the character of their origin derived from the cradle of the moral and religious ideas of the universe.

All those separate facts, all those scattered testimonies, recur to that fruitful principle which places in the East the centre of science and of civilization. It is not in our power to trace uninterruptedly their progress, from the first revelations of the Divinity to the most mysterious aberrations of human reason ; but it is possible to ascertain, by the analogy of ideas rather than by that of words, some prin-

cial epochs, leaving to reflection the task of filling up the intervals. The history of philosophical should always be connected with that of religious ideas; for philosophy, left to itself, could only illustrate half of the history of the human mind.

The ancient mysteries, in relation with truths of a superior order, bear likewise many luminous characters which we undertake to expose. It is now generally acknowledged, that subjects so important should be discussed with particular attention. Philological researches will not suffice: we must combine a criticism of ideas with a criticism of words, and proceed by the light of some important discoveries.

An hypothesis adopted by many writers of the eighteenth century, represents Egypt as the parent of all religions, and the source of all human knowledge. This opinion is not new; the Egyptians themselves were the first who established it\*.

\* Diod. i. c. 29. The same author (speaking of the

Among the numerous supporters of it in modern times, it will be sufficient to name two late historians of the mysteries, M. de St<sup>e</sup> Croix and M. Dupuis. But some others, such as Kæmpfer, Huet, La Croze, and Brucker, have even regarded India as an Egyptian colony. If this system were not at variance with our religious traditions, it would still contradict the most authentic notions of history and philosophy <sup>1</sup>. Under many points of view, Egypt offers itself as an object unparalleled in the annals of the world; but nothing appears that marks it as a central country, neither its geographical position, the natural character of its inhabitants, its political destinies, nor the progress of its government; nothing appears to demonstrate why it should be the source of human culture. Some local applications, some national symbols, cannot disprove

*Egyptians*) says in another place φιλοτιμότερον ἢ περ ἀληθινώτερον (ὥς γέ μοι φαίνεται)—(i. p. 17.)

the Asiatic origin of the Egyptian religion ; whilst all the plan of this theocracy serves to show the priests as a foreign colony, zealous in preserving the charge which they had brought with them, and ingenious in discovering all the proper means for fascinating the eye and bending the neck of the vulgar<sup>2</sup>. When a multitude of symbols absorbs the fundamental ideas, when an impenetrable language eternises that darkness which covers the religious system, the thread of allegory breaks in the hands of the theocrats, uncertainty increases, the yoke becomes heavier, and we are bewildered in a labyrinth of exterior practices, of which the clue has long since been lost.

But if Egypt invented not any thing, it preserved all. Even the severity of its government and its high antiquity contributed much to this ; and Egypt may justly be regarded as the true link which united Asia to Europe.

Egypt transmitted to the Greeks the eastern traditions, after having altered them. In the religious ideas of Greece, all that differs from the Egyptian theology serves precisely to characterise the two nations. Traditions of a gloomy and melancholy aspect in Egypt, adapted themselves to the smiling climate and lively imagination of the Greeks.

If ancient Egypt were better known, if we possessed more exact notions of its religious worship and historical traditions, the mysteries might easily be traced to their source ; but unfortunately a profound obscurity still hangs over the language, the history, and the monuments of Egypt. Some successful attempts (especially the great enterprises of the French government,) give us reason to expect new and important information. The English, by their labours in Bengal, have already ascertained, in a very authentic manner, various facts relative to the union and the

points of relation which subsisted between ancient India and Egypt. By what we have learned of their mythological, historical, and geographical traditions, a conformity is so well attested, that we may venture to adopt it with confidence<sup>3</sup>.

The ancients, who considered the Indians as *Autochthones*\* thought, according to Philostratus and Lucian, that the Egyptians had borrowed their civilization from the Indians†. “I know,” says Pausanias, “that the Chaldeans and the magi of the Indians are the first who pronounced the soul to be immortal; from them the Greeks learned their doctrine, and above all Plato the son of Aristo‡.” These notions respecting India were preserved during a long time. St. Clement of

\* Diod. ii. cap. 38. πάντα (ἔθνη) δοκεῖν ὑπάρχειν αὐτόχθονα. Nonn. Dionys. l. xxxiv. v. 182. Ἰνδῶν γηγενέων μιμήσατο πάτριον ἀλκήν.

† Philostr. Vit. Apoll. iii. cap. 6.—vi. cap. 6. Lucian. Fugit.

‡ Messen. cap. 32.

Alexandria and St. Jerome make mention of Boudha\*. It is certain that oriental pantheism, which represented the universe as an emanation from the primary being, penetrated into Egypt and Greece.

The Indian philosophers explained this system by the image of a spider, which draws from its own bosom the thread that forms its web, sits in the midst of its work, communicates movement to it, and at pleasure draws back what it had sent forth from its body†. They compared the world to an egg; the Egyptians and Grecks adopted this symbol. We shall not enter further into this detail, which would divert us from our subject, but shall observe, that the recent discoveries perfectly agree with the testimonies of the ancients. It is proved that India was acquainted with *Misr* and the Nile; that the Egyptian trinity composed of Osiris,

\* Stromat. i. p. 305.—Hieron. Adv. Jov. i.

† Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. xxxi. p. 234.

Horus, and Typhon, has a common origin with the Indian trinity, consisting of Brahmah, Vishnou, and Mahadeva<sup>4</sup>; that the worship of the Phallus in Egypt, faithfully copied from the *lingam* of the Indians, was introduced into Greece by Melampus\*; finally, that the division of casts, and the hereditary succession of the priesthood, were not of Egyptian invention, as Dupuis asserts. Nor is it more probable that the fabulous Sesostris carried into Asia the religion of the Egyptians†, nor that the persecution under Cambyzes forced the Egyptian priests to civilize India‡. But Egypt served intermediately between Asia and Greece, and was the principal channel of that intellectual commerce which subsisted from the earliest times between these two regions.

\* Herodot. ii. 49.

† Recherches sur les Mysteres du Paganisme, p. 8.—Herodot. (Larcher's translation) tom. ii. p. 401, note 389, first edition.

‡ Kämpfer Histoire du Japon, l. i. chap. 2. p. 33.



The most important however of all the new discoveries, and that which has most relation to the object of this essay, is contained in the fifth volume of the Asiatic Researches. "At the conclusion of the Mysteries of Eleusis the congregation was dismissed in these words, Κόγξ, "Ομ, Παξ, *Conx, Om, Pax*. These mysterious words have been considered hitherto as inexplicable; but they are pure Sanscrit, and used to this day by the Brahmens at the conclusion of religious rites. They are thus written in the language of the gods, as the Hindus call the language of their sacred books, *Canscha, Om, Pacsha*.

"*Canscha*, signifies the object of our most ardent wishes.

"*Om*, is the famous monosyllable used both at the beginning and conclusion of a prayer, or any religious rite, like *amen*.

"*Pacsha*, exactly answers to the obsolete Latin word *vix*, it signifies change, course, stead, place, turn of work, duty,

fortune. It is used particularly after pouring water in honour of the gods and *Pitris*. It appears also from Hesychius,

I. "That these words were pronounced aloud at the conclusion of every momentous transaction, religious or civil.

II. "That when judges, after hearing a cause, gave their suffrages by dropping pebbles of different colours into a box; the noise made by each pebble was called by one of these three words (if not by all three) but more probably by the word *pacsha*, as the *turn* or *pacsha* of the voting judge was over.

"When lawyers pleaded in a court of justice, they were allowed to speak two or three hours, according to the importance of the cause; and for this purpose there was a *clepsydra* or water-clock ready, which making a certain noise at the end of the expired *pacsha*, *vix* or *turn*, this noise was called *pacsha*. This word *pacsha* is pronounced *vacsh* and *vact* in the vulgar

dialects, and from it the obsolete Latin word *vix* is obviously derived." 2607

This interesting discovery of Mr. Wilford not only fixes the true origin of the mysteries, but shows us the intimate and numerous relations which had maintained the influence of oriental ideas over the civilization of antiquity. It is not necessary to detail here all the results of the explanation given by Wilford: every unprejudiced person will see in the East the cradle of religious traditions and of philosophical modes of discipline. We are still in want of several materials, yet may cherish the hope of obtaining them; but what light has not already been imparted by the researches made within the last twenty years; and who is there that would not wish to direct the whole attention of Europe towards Asiatic literature, the source of all our knowledge!

It appears then, from what has been here noticed, that the religious mysteries

of Greece were of foreign origin ; that Egypt did not give them birth ; and finally, that we are enabled by a luminous and singular fact to discover their true country <sup>6</sup>.

## SECTION III.



THE natural state of man is neither the savage state nor that of corruption. It is a simple state, better and more nearly approaching to the Divinity. The savage and the corrupt man are equally remote from it; but both serve as irrefragable monuments, to attest that fall of man, which contains in itself alone the key of all his history. Hence that retrograde motion of the moral world, in opposition to the constantly ascending force of the human mind; hence the present state, in which the wisdom of men is only an intuition, a recollection of the past, and in which virtue itself is but a return towards God.

It seems that all religions have had a glimpse of this great truth, the fall of man. It is found in all the theological systems of the globe, and serves as the base of ancient philosophy. In the mythological traditions, it appears sometimes as a principal idea, sometimes as an accessory notion. We often discover it under the symbols of combat, of grief; at other times under the image of a slain god<sup>1</sup>. Sometimes it is spiritualized; and philosophy then proclaims the degeneracy of the soul, and the necessity of its gradual return to the place which it had occupied\*. All moral truths of the first order which connect themselves with that of the fall of man, those first truths immediately transmitted or developed by the Divinity, could not fail to survive the greatest wanderings of the human mind†.

\* Plat. in Phæd., in Cratyl. Macrob. Somn. Scip. 1—9. Clem. Strom. iii. p. 433.

† Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. xxxv. p. 171—  
188.

The dispersion of nations, the abuse of allegory, the personification of the divine attributes, that of the powers of nature, the confusion of ideas on incorporeal substances, all these principles combined, whilst by degrees they produced polytheism, could not hinder some fragments of the primordial truths from being preserved in the East; and these by a wonderful direction spread themselves afar, traversed Egypt, and, however altered, became in the centre of the ancient world the mysterious doctrine of the *Aporrhete*, and the object of the great mysteries of Eleusis.

To facts so simple supported by historical traditions, to results so satisfactory connected with our sacred traditions, no contradiction should be offered. Of all hypotheses on the origin of civilization, that is indubitably the most solid which establishes a common centre, a focus of information. To discover the solution of

a grand problem in history and philosophy, without injuring the one or the other, is the chief triumph of judicious criticism. The union of philosophy with criticism, is most particularly necessary in the vast field of antiquity, where the most ingenious conjecture is rarely successful; and where those who adopt the most reasonable hypotheses, still find every instant that they must not hope to conquer all difficulties by one explanation, nor reduce every thing to one system<sup>3</sup>. In the study of ancient religions let us be content to seize the principal features: these constitute the character; the others have been added successively, and often at random.

Guided by this principle, we shall not hazard any further conjecture on the transmigration of primitive and fundamental ideas. We have noticed their birth in the East, and their residence in Egypt: let us now proceed to view them established in Greece.



The mysteries of Eleusis were divided, like the philosophy of the ancients, into two parts ; the one *esoteric*, the other *exoteric*; and these two parts were the *greater* and the *lesser* mysteries.

It is generally allowed that the *lesser* were the more ancient, and this progression is consistent with the nature of things. M. de St<sup>e</sup> Croix, supported by Meursius, regards the lesser mysteries as preparatory ceremonies \*. It is, however, more probable that the great and lesser mysteries were absolutely distinct.

Undoubtedly, he who was initiated in the great, knew all that the lesser mysteries contained ; but there is nothing to prove that every *Mysta* might become an *Epopt*, or, in other words, that those who were adepts in the lesser mysteries might on that account claim initiation in the great. Every Greek, without distinction of age or of origin, might be admitted to

\* Recherches sur les Mysteres du Paganisme, p. 182, &c.

the lesser mysteries: barbarians, in process of time, enjoyed the same advantage. If to obtain admission to the *greater* mysteries had been a matter of equal facility, could they have exercised the same influence, would they never have been divulged<sup>4</sup>?

This double doctrine, which raised a wall of partition between the philosopher and the people, is a distinguishing feature of antiquity, inherent in all its institutions, in all its systems, and in all its civilization. Christianity, in destroying the double doctrine, became a grand epoch, even in the history of philosophy. The division of the mysteries into greater and lesser, belonged to the very nature of the institution: the great mysteries were reserved for an inconsiderable number of initiated persons, because they contained revelations which would have given a mortal blow to the religion of the state; the lesser mysteries were within the reach of

all men. We are induced by every consideration to believe, that the lesser mysteries comprehended symbolical representations of the history of Ceres and of Proserpine; still, however, not teaching any thing directly contrary to polytheism: the doctrine of a future state, in which the guilty should be punished and the good rewarded, did not exceed the limits of the predominant religion.

The initiated might even learn that some of their gods had been men, whose meritorious actions had obtained for them the *apotheosis*\*, without any attack on polytheism, which having never formed a body of doctrine, offered in this respect the greatest latitude. It is probable that the lesser mysteries formed only a sort of rational polytheism. The great alone, the *τελευταί*, possessed many sublime truths, and some traditional monuments of the first order. It is not possible to seize on the

\* Cic. Tusc. l.i. cap.12. See Section V.

whole of this mysterious doctrine, the ancients having only left us some imperfect fragments, some obscure indications and allusions. Modern discoveries consist in a great number of hypotheses, and in very few facts.

It is not necessary here to mention all that relates to the structure of the temple of Eleusis, which, according to Strabo\*, could contain from twenty thousand to thirty thousand men<sup>6</sup>; nor the order of the ceremonies, nor the different functions of the mystagogues, either in the great or the lesser mysteries. On these subjects antiquity has left us but little information, and this has been already sufficiently examined by various accomplished men of letters.

In their writings may be found all that it is possible to collect concerning the *hierophant*, (Ἱεροφάντης), the torch-bearer, (Δαδοῦχος), the sacred herald, (Ἱεροκῆρυξ,)

\* Lib. ix. p. 272. ed. Casaub. 1587.

the attendant at the altar, (ὁ ἐπὶ Βωμῶν), and the other persons of inferior rank employed in the temple, their dresses, their functions, the days appointed for processions, &c. Several of these notions are obscure, others contradictory; and if they serve to give an idea of the exterior solemnities, they do not throw any light on the mysteries concealed within the sanctuary.

We must again acknowledge the impossibility of determining, with precision, the notions which the Epopts received; but that connection which we have ascertained between the initiations and the true source of all our knowledge, suffices to prove that they not only acquired from them just notions respecting the Divinity,—the relations between man and the Divinity,—the primitive dignity of human nature,—its fall,—the immortality of the soul,—the means of its return towards God, and finally, another order of things after death,—but that traditions were im-

parted to them, *oral* and even *written*, precious remains of the great shipwreck of humanity. We know as a fact, that the hierophant communicated to the Epopets, certain sacred books, which none but the initiated could read\*. And it appears, from what Pausanias relates of the Phe-neatæ, that some writings were preserved between stones called *petroma*, (Πέτρωμα,) and that they were never read but during the night†. Perhaps, they united to these historical monuments some notions respecting the general system of the universe, some theurgic doctrines, and perhaps even some positive discoveries in human sciences. The residence of eastern traditions in Egypt may have connected them with those great discoveries, this wisdom of the Egyptians, to which Scripture itself bears witness in various places.

\* Galen. περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀπλῶν φαρμάκων δυνάμεως. l. viii. init.

† Arcad. p. 249. (viii. 15. It is also the opinion of Meursius, Eleus. cap. 10.)

It is not in fact probable, that the superior initiation was limited to the demonstration of the unity of God, and the immortality of the soul, by philosophical arguments. Clemens of Alexandria expressly says, when speaking of the great mysteries, "Here ends all instruction; we behold nature and things\*." Besides, moral notions were so widely diffused, that the mysteries could not, merely on account of them, lay claim to the magnificent eulogiums bestowed by the most enlightened personages of antiquity. For if we suppose that the revelation of those truths had been the only object of the mysteries, would they not have ceased to exist from the moment when those truths were publicly taught? Would Pindar, Plato, Cicero, Epictetus, have spoken of them with such admiration, if the hierophant had satisfied himself with loudly proclaiming his own opinions, or those of his order, on truths

\* Strom. V. cap. 2.

with which they were themselves acquainted? Whence could the hierophant have derived those ideas, of what sources could he have availed himself which were not equally accessible to philosophy? Let us then conclude, that not only great moral truths were revealed to the initiated, but likewise traditions both oral and written, which ascended to the first ages of the world. These remnants, placed in the midst of polytheism, constituted the essence, and the secret doctrine of the mysteries.

This hypothesis not only reconciles the apparent contradictions of the religious system of the ancients, but perfectly agrees with our sacred traditions<sup>7</sup>. It must be remarked, that the first fathers of the church, who furnish such interesting notions on the mysteries, alternately mention them with much praise, or represent them in odious colours. St. Clemens of Alexandria, who was himself supposed to have



been initiated\*, at one time ascribes to the mysteries an object the most frivolous and even shameful†, and transforms them into schools of atheism‡; but, at another time, asserts that the truths taught in the mysteries had been stolen by the philosophers from Moses and the prophets§, for according to St. Clemens, the mysteries were established by the philosophers||.

Tertullian who imputes the invention of them to the Devil¶, Arnobius, Athenagoras, and St. Justin, have all spoken concerning them nearly in the same manner. Their praises and their blame may be equally well founded, without being equally disinterested; for it is necessary to distinguish epochs. At the time when the fathers wrote, it is certain that great abuses had

\* Euseb. Præparat. Evan. l.ii. cap. 2. p. 61. πάντων  
μὲν διὰ πείρας ἐλθῶν ἀνίρ.

† Coh. ad Gentes, p. 14, &c.

‡ Ibid. p. 17.

§ Strom. V. p. 650.

|| Ibid. p. 681.

¶ De Præscrip. Hæreticor. cap. 40.

crept into the mysteries, which were become the support of polytheism.

And it may be easily supposed, that in this respect the fathers, who considered them as the sanctuaries of error, endeavoured to discredit them by all the means in their power. Besides this, the corruption of the mysteries had diffused some notions of the ceremonies practised at the celebration of them, and the symbols had been divulged by indiscreet *Mystæ*. Every thing conspired to profane the mysteries, already fallen from their primitive dignity. But before we examine this epoch, let us pause a moment at that during which the mysteries flourished. Although it was then impossible that what the mysteries taught should be revealed<sup>s</sup>, we find among the ancients some allusions to the great truths which they comprehended. Cicero, addressing himself to Atticus, thus represents them: “Amidst all of excellent or divine that your Athens has produced and dif-

fused among men, nothing is more excellent than the mysteries, which exalt us from a rude and savage state to true humanity. They initiate us into the true principles of life\*, for they teach us not only to live pleasantly, but to die with better hopes." This fine eulogium does not require any commentary; we are delighted to hear it from the lips of a great man, educated in the study of philosophy, and familiar with every branch of human knowledge. Several other passages which have been already remarked in the works of ancient writers, contain pompous encomiums on the mysteries, and indicate the various moral and philosophical truths which they inculcated. The ingenious Warburton<sup>9</sup> has been more successful in proving the importance of the mysteries on this account, than in describing the sixth

\* De Leg. ii. 14. Initiaque ut appellantur ita revera principia vitæ cognovimus. This phrase is not easily translated.

book of Virgil's *Æneid*, as an exact picture of the ceremonies, and even of the secret doctrine of the initiations. The conformity of a few rites, can only prove, at most, that Virgil was acquainted with some ceremonies practised in the mysteries: besides, his philosophy was the Epicurean\*, and we know that those who professed it, were regarded as hostile to the mysteries†. It is probable also, that some of his pictures derived their colouring from the perusal of the works of Pythagorean philosophers.

Let us here observe, that the Grecian philosophers have been in constant opposition to the doctrine of the initiations: this opposition has been sanctioned by the refusal of Socrates to participate in the mysteries of Eleusis<sup>10</sup>. Some modern writers have availed themselves of this circumstance to degrade the initiations

\* Servius, ad *Æn.* VI. v. 376.

† Plut. *T. Non posse suav. viv. Sec. Epic.* tom. ii. p. 1103.

into simple lustrations, to which, in process of time, a secret doctrine was adapted, relating merely to the services rendered by legislators, such as agriculture, laws, &c\*. The opinion of the Grecian philosophers on this subject will appear liable to strong suspicions, when we recollect that philosophy in Greece was a true power. Having undertaken the bold task of tearing the veil from nature, could philosophy reconcile itself to the mystic obscurity which the initiations spread over the most important truths? The Grecian philosophy was analytical in principle, the most opposite opinions tended to the same object; and as all the knowledge of the ancients, to be admitted into the original system should present a local application and acquire a degree of life; the union of philosophy and of mysticism became impossible. The Greeks, who understood in the highest de-

\* St<sup>e</sup> Croix, *Recherches sur les Mysteres du Paganisme*, p. 369.

gree, the art of rendering science popular, did not, like us, confine philosophy within the narrow compass of a book, or the limits of a closet. They discussed great moral questions before a people, who felt a lively interest in those debates ; and the rivalry of system, did not, besides, allow to leave in a respectful half-light, the great theogonic and cosmogonic problems of which the solution was required. This direction, not perhaps very suitable to the true progress of philosophy, favoured in a high degree poetry and eloquence. But since the invention of printing has dethroned speech, the course of human knowledge has been inverted : philosophy banished to the silence of the closet, is become speculative ; it may now acknowledge the existence of truths which it cannot demonstrate. A brilliant and enlightened people does not, any longer, oblige it to descend into the arena, nor does the general interest any longer follow its researches.

Eloquence and poetry, banished also from ordinary life, have not been able, like philosophy, to profit by this exclusion; and in proportion as the mass of our empirical knowledge increases with time, the further we remove ourselves from that age when philosophy, poetry, and eloquence, exercised in unison their influence on a people so happily organised, that they rendered divine honours to Beauty; and followed Plato in crowds, whilst one verse inaccurately or inelegantly pronounced on the stage, would offend every ear and excite a general commotion in their theatres<sup>11</sup>.

This digression seemed necessary towards appreciating the true character of ancient philosophy, and its relations with the religious mysteries. We may trace the refusal of Socrates, rather to his situation than to his opinion; and Epaminondas and Agesilaus, in refusing to be initiated, may have been influenced by some personal motives from which no argument can be deduced against the mysteries. The sar-

casms of Diogenes the Cynic, were pointed at those abuses which had crept into the lesser mysteries, and perhaps at the excessive credulity of a people who allowed themselves to be governed by imagination. We shall only add respecting Socrates, that philosophy was not always inflexible; the initiations found a zealous apologist in Plato; and this authority is the more considerable, as Plato indisputably raised himself to a greater height than any preceding or subsequent philosopher.

The ancients have already written on the subject of the mysteries. Melanthius quoted by Atheneus, and by the Scholiast of Aristophanes, Menander, named by the same author, and Hicesius, noticed by Clement of Alexandria\*, published works concerning the mysteries. We cannot sufficiently deplore the loss of those writings;

\* Others might be mentioned. See the preface to Meursius's "Eleusinia," and the "Recherches," &c. of M. de St<sup>e</sup> Croix, p. 339, 340.



although it is probable that they related merely to the details of exterior ceremonies. We can scarcely indeed believe, that they discussed the true point in question, the object and origin of the greater mysteries, and their relations with polytheism.

## SECTION IV.



WE find, however, that the mysteries, by a fatality attached to human affairs, even the most sacred, did not long retain their purity. The initiations soon degenerated into a vain ceremony; abstinence was almost openly violated; the governments speculated on the piety of the initiated. We learn from the testimonies of Isæus and Demosthenes\*, that already in their time, courtezans had been admitted to initiation: and, if we believe what the fathers relate, a horrible corruption had seized on the sanctuary of Eleusis<sup>1</sup>. It is probable, however, that all these excesses occurred only among the Mystæ.

\* Is. Orat. de Hæred. Philoctem. p. 61.—Demosth. in Neær. p. 862.

Every circumstance induces us to believe that the number of epopts was at all times very limited ; and, if it increased with the decline of the mysteries, it could not have been much extended ; for we do not find that the secrecy of the sanctuary was violated even at this epoch. In proportion as corruption was introduced, the spirit which animated the institution decreased, and empty forms still subsisted long after the moving principle had ceased to act.

The initiations were continued even under the Christian emperors. St. Jerome says, “ *Hierophantas quoque Atheniensium (legant) usque hodie cicuta sorbitione castrare\**. Valentinian, who died in the year of Christ, 374, was willing to destroy the mysteries after the reign of Julian ; but, at the solicitations of Pretextatus, he relinquished this project. This circumstance is related as follows, in the fourth book of Zosimus’s

\* Adv. Jovin. l. 1. Extr.

History—"Valentinian, desirous of introducing new laws, wished to begin by reforming the altars; he forbade nocturnal sacrifices, believing that such a prohibition would put an end to the scandalous practices. But Pretextatus, who was at that time proconsul in Greece, a man endowed with every virtue, represented to him that the Greeks would consider life as insupportable, were they not permitted to celebrate those most sacred mysteries which bind together the human race (*τὰ συνέχοντα τὸ ἀνθρώπειον γένος ἁγιώτατα μυστήρια*). Valentinian did not insist on the execution of the law which he had decreed; and all was continued according to ancient usage."—It appears that the mysteries were comprehended in the general proscriptions of Theodosius the Great, who, as some historians inform us, overthrew all the altars of polytheism\*.

The mysteries, however, before their fall,

\* Anno Christi, 346—395.

enjoyed a brilliant though absolutely unexpected epoch, and assumed a new aspect. This is, without doubt, one of the most interesting monuments of their history ; with a rapid sketch of it, we shall terminate this section.

The religious mysteries of the Greeks formed, as we have seen, the true essence of polytheism, without altering its exterior forms. On the first view, it would seem that moral truths of a superior order, the multiplicity of symbolical and popular doctrines, inveterate abuses, and licentious practices, could not very well agree. If, however, we examine objects closely, we shall find that nothing was more compatible than the knowledge of some primordial truths restricted to a chosen few, and the ignorance of the multitude; the double doctrine, equally dividing the religion and the philosophy of the ancients, formed the base of this system, which united all contraries, and combined into one solid mass of con-

sistency elements the most heterogeneous. Besides, we must believe that natural ideas on the unity of God and the immortality of the soul, were more diffused than is generally supposed ; but the people allowed themselves to be seduced by the antiquity of the practices of polytheism, and blindly followed the road to which they were directed by the illusions of authority and of genius.

Polytheism, besieged on all sides, endeavoured still to defend itself; and, before its fall, attempted to combat Christianity with its own weapons. As the new religion addressed itself at once to all the intellectual faculties of man, the adherents of polytheism wished to ennoble their faith by a moral dignity which it had never possessed, and they gave it a supposititious object altogether opposite to its character. For this purpose, they collected every thing that wore an appearance of mysticism, and then formed a whole, which caused polytheism

to assume an aspect entirely new : philosophy entered into the general combination, or rather took the lead ; but all these efforts were vain, and only served to enhance the triumph of the Christian religion.

Those deceive themselves who discover in the history of the eclectism of Alexandria only a tissue of obscure manœuvres and unconnected doctrines. It was one main-spring of a system conceived with ability, embraced with ardour, transmitted from sect to sect, from generation to generation. On the throne of the world, Marcus Aurelius was the hero, Julian the martyr of this system. In the schools of the philosophers, its principal supporters were Apollonius Tyanæus<sup>2</sup>, Ammonius Saccas<sup>3</sup>, Jamblichus, Celsus<sup>4</sup>, Porphyry, Proclus, and above all Plotinus, who made so bad a use of his brilliant imagination.

In the vast plan concerted for opposing the progress of Christianity, nothing had been neglected which promised success.

The eclectics not only wished to reestablish the ancient authority of the temple of Eleusis, but even introduced mysteries unused before that time. Those of Mithras, unknown in Greece, appeared at Rome under Trajan, about the year 101 of Christ. As all those efforts had but one object, most of the Christian ceremonies were borrowed; to these were added the most terrible trials, and it is even said that blood flowed in the cavern of Mithras. Adrian forbade human sacrifices\*, but Commodus was accused of having sacrificed a man†. In these mysteries various symbolical ceremonies were represented. A fragment of Pallas, preserved by Porphyry‡, informs us, that these representations chiefly related to the various transmigrations of the soul, and its abode on earth. The worship of Isis had penetrated into Greece, and the Egyptian goddess was known there in the

\* Porphyr. *de Abstin.* l. 11. § 56.

† Lamprid. *in Comm.* cap. 9.

‡ De Abst. l. iv. § 16.



time of Pausanias, by her true name\*. But the Isiac mysteries, which flourished at Corinth and at Rome under the emperors, were very different from the ancient mysteries of Saïs. Apuleius affords the most copious details concerning one of those festivals which the Romans called *Isidis navigium*†. The Eleusinian mysteries appear to have served as a model for those of Isis, at least with respect to exterior practices: but it was principally the Orphic ceremonies that received at this time considerable extension. The Platonists did not disdain to unite with the Orphics; and this sect made great progress in the first ages of Christianity. Proclus, in his Commentary on the *Timæus*, and in his *Platonic Theology*, undertook even to show that the doctrine of Plato was the same with that of the Orphics. Still it would be difficult to combine under one aspect the different destinations given by the Platonics to the mys-

\* Paus. *Phoc.* cap. 32.      † Apul. *Metamorph.* xi.

teries of Eleusis, at that time absolutely degenerated. It appears that they caused the *Epoplée* to be regarded as a kind of physicomystic theology, and that, like the Stoics, they sought rather the nature of things than the nature of the gods\*. In another point of view they also explained the *Epoplée* by theurgic means, making use at one time of that hierarchy of Intelligences, or *genii*, subordinate to each other, which Plato mentions, and at other times, of ideas altogether mystical. A passage of Porphyry quoted by Eusebius†, will give a sufficient idea of the manner in which they sometimes explained the symbols—“God being a luminous principle, residing in the midst of the most subtile fire, he remains for ever invisible to the eyes of those who do not elevate themselves above material life: on this account, the sight of transparent bodies, such as *crystal*, *Parian*

\* Cic. *de Nat. Deor.* l. i. cap. 42.

† Præp. Evang. l. iii. cap. 7.

*marble*, and even *ivory*, recalls the idea of of divine light; as the sight of *gold* excites an idea of its purity, for gold cannot be sullied. Some have thought by a *black stone* was signified the invisibility of the divine essence. To express supreme reason, the Divinity was represented under the human form—and beautiful, for God is the source of beauty; of different ages, and in various attitudes, sitting or upright; of one or the other sex, as a virgin or a young man, a husband or a bride, that all the shades and gradations might be marked. Every thing luminous was subsequently attributed to the gods; the *sphere*, and all that is spherical, to the universe, to the sun and the moon—sometimes to Fortune and to Hope. The *circle*, and all circular figures, to eternity—to the celestial movements, to the circles and zones of the heavens. The *section of circles*, to the phases of the moon; and *pyramids* and *obelisks*, to the igneous principle, and through that to

the gods of Heaven. A *cone* expresses the sun; a *cylinder* the earth; the *phallus* and *triangle* (a symbol of the matrix), designate generation<sup>5</sup>."

Most of these symbols, as we learn from St. Clement of Alexandria, belonged to the mysteries of Eleusis\*. We see that the foundation of the doctrine of the Platonists was a system of theurgy, in which we must not seek philosophic precision. This doctrine, not able to restrain itself within the bounds of a regular system, presents, in general, a great fluctuation of ideas. We must consider all that is found in the writings of the principal eclectics concerning the ancient mysteries, as individual opinions, which may be varied and interpreted without end, but which tend incessantly to the same object. Let this suffice for our present purpose. A detailed history of polytheism can alone illustrate by degrees the filiation subsisting between the

\* Coh. ad Gentes, p. 17.

mysteries instituted at the birth of polytheism and the last philosophical systems that preceded its fall, between the sanctuary of Eleusis and the school of the eclectics of Alexandria. In a philosophical point of view, the new Platonism was but a very imperfect image of the doctrine of Plato: some of his ideas might still be discovered in it, but corrupted and perverted from their true signification \*. The eclectics, in bringing them back to Oriental ideas, certainly restored them to their true source; but this very return must have affected the purity of Plato's philosophical conceptions. A strange mixture was formed of them with the worship of light, the system of emanations, and the doctrine of the metempsychosis. The abstractions of the Grecian philosopher were personified: the world was peopled with a multitude of intermediate agents. That faculty attri-

\* M. de Gerando, *Hist. Comp. des Syst. de Phil.* tom. i. p. 193.

buted to the human understanding of seizing on eternal truths without demonstration, and without the power of accounting for them, was erected into a principle; and this principle, true in some respects, was here a fruitful source of various errors. The human mind, distracted by enthusiasm, was less employed in the contemplation of truth, than of the modes of relation with God, as much as with his subaltern agents. It might even be said, that the new eclectics, who more frequently mentioned the name of Plato than of Pythagoras, approximated rather to the latter and his school, which, in fact, was adapted to please them. For those at the head of the prevailing system availed themselves of the austerity of the Pythagorean precepts, and of the mystery which covered them; but they employed the authority of Plato's name, and never was this authority more imposing. The Platonists, most unfaithful disciples of the academy, wished also to appropriate

the severe empirism of Aristotle : and from this mixture resulted a system, strange, obscure, full of imagination and poetry ; it was the last form of polytheism, with which it fell<sup>7</sup>.

It is certain, as we have remarked, that the school of Alexandria deviated very widely from the doctrine of Plato ; and that, in overstepping the limits, it was bewildered in a labyrinth, of which we should vainly endeavour to find the outlet : but, though we blame the excesses into which the eclectics of Alexandria fell, we must still render that justice which is due to a happy and rare combination of force, imagination, sagacity, and genius. It is evident, that placed amidst the treasures accumulated by the Ptolemies, and become, as we may say, inheritors of the ancient civilization, and forerunners of the lights which were to dawn, the Platonists have formed a dazzling epoch in the annals of the human mind. It is necessary above

all, to study them relatively to those Oriental ideas, with which their works are replete : fortunate would it have been, if the spirit of system and the love of paradox had not too often induced them to corrupt the venerable sources from which they did not cease to derive those ideas !—An assiduous study of the mystic philosophy of the Indians, Arabians, and Persians, combined with modern researches on the Platonic philosophy, would yield undoubtedly very great results, and perhaps enable us to seize on that invisible but powerful chain, which links together those strange doctrines that we are accustomed to consider separately, and which, on that very account, appear to us almost incomprehensible<sup>s</sup>.

It would be equally unjust to imagine that, in this great fermentation of ideas, the Christian religion was always found opposed to philosophy ; never, on the contrary, was there an epoch more honour-



able for philosophy than the history of Christianity, until the council of Nice. The impulse given by the Platonists had propagated a taste for philosophic studies. Almost all the first fathers of the church were accused of having *platonised*: most of them believed that Plato had been acquainted with the sacred books: but without any examination of those opinions generally received, we shall only consider them as a positive proof that the Christian religion never persecuted true philosophy; with which, on the contrary, it has always endeavoured to coalesce. We shall close this section by a brief summary of the principal idea contained in our preceding pages. We have endeavoured to prove that the religious mysteries of Greece, far from being vain ceremonies, actually preserved some remains of ancient traditions, and formed the true esoteric doctrine of polytheism: when polytheism, near its fall, still wished to contend with the Christian

religion, it awakened, faithful to its double doctrine, on one side all that was striking in the mysteries, and on the other all that was most exalted in philosophy. Hence that singular coincidence between the re-establishment of the mysteries and the birth of Platonism: but public worship and philosophy had changed characters; and it was found impossible to restore any thing but empty forms and worn out imagery, that had mere verbal authority for their sanction, were degraded by the abuse of ideas, and involved polytheism in their fall.

## SECTION V.



It is not our intention to trace all that has been attributed to the mysteries, nor to discuss the various details connected with them. The présent essay, as we have before said, does not offer itself as a complete treatise on this interesting branch of antiquities; nor can it even supersede any of the works already published respecting the same subject: designed to afford some general views, this tract should be considered merely as the outline of a more extensive performance, or as a supplement to all those with which the learned world has been successively enriched.

This declaration is here purposely repeated, lest we should incur the reproach

of having passed over with silent neglect a great portion of that controversy which has been excited on the important subject of the mysteries. Among the number of disputed questions, we shall state one which seems to merit particular attention, and to require some details—"Whether did the ancients teach in their mysteries that the gods had been only men? and whether, in truth, the gods of polytheism had been men?" Some illustrious writers have declared their opinions in the affirmative. Supported by Herodotus, Cicero, and Diodorus Siculus, and the fathers of the church, they have maintained at once these two propositions; and, at first view, it must be owned their arguments seem specious. In later times, several persons of equal learning and ability have opposed this system. We should not unite our voice with their objections, if, faithful to our principles of literary criticism, we did not hope to place the true subject of our re-

searches in some new points of view, from which it may derive illustration.

We cannot too frequently repeat, that the examination and discussion of ancient authorities, and their chronological classification, are the most certain means by which we may discover the important truths in the science of antiquity. This rational process is equally distant from bold *paradoxology*, and from blind and implicit submission to any system whatever. How many systems are propped merely by some passages, badly interpreted, and ill understood! systems which an exact analysis, or a simple collation of dates, would cause to disappear!

Such, we venture to affirm, is the state of our present question—one so intimately connected with the mysteries, that it must engage our attention; and, in fact, if the secret of the mysteries had been to teach the human origin of the gods, all farther researches would be useless, and fall of

themselves. The true origin of the gods of Greece, the moment of their translation into that country, and their relations with foreign divinities, are lost in the night of time. The bases of the history of Greece have remained, notwithstanding unheard of efforts, inaccessible to the torch of criticism ; and, in this respect, the origin of Grecian theology, of which the development has been so luminous, is, still more than all the rest, covered with darkness. We know that Greece, peopled by Asiatic colonies, was subjugated in turn, by races of men different among themselves, but of one common origin. These new colonies brought with them the elements of their religious worship ; these elements, confounded with the local notions already subsisting, gave birth to the Grecian theogony, which afterwards diffused itself over a great portion of the known world, and which ended by invading even its own , cradle<sup>1</sup>.

The Egyptian and Phœnician colonists imported into Greece, with their religious modes of faith, their languages and their traditions; and the confused vestiges of this transmigration may still be found. As some remains of Oriental idioms\* have been discovered in the dialects of Greece, so we are enabled to perceive, under the varied forms of their mythology, those primitive features which announce its foreign origin.

In this state of things, when the imported ideas can scarcely be distinguished from the local notions, any attempt to trace back this immense mass to a single principle would be absurd; and one might be justly astonished at the boldness with which later generations have followed erroneous hypotheses through this labyrinth, if the strong inclination of the Greeks towards a spirit of system were not well known, and the obstinacy and bad faith

\* Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. xxx.

with which certain learned factions have acted in regard to science itself.

When the rage for systems had seized upon Greece, and attention was directed towards national antiquities, two parties divided the literature, and possessed in turn the public credulity. The Epicureans professed that they had found, by the help of history, the solution of the theological system. Euhemerus was the chief of this doctrine, which bears his name, and which some have styled the *historic* system, or system of the *apotheosis*, because it supposes that all the gods have been men deified. On a different side, the Stoics founded the *allegorical* system, which, by means of abstract ideas, reduced all the Grecian mythology to a tissue of moral allegories and physical phenomena. This physico-mystic system subsequently became, in the hands of the new Platonists, an abundant source of singular opinions; which we have noticed in some passages of this essay.



The rapid progress of Epicurism, as M. de St<sup>e</sup> Croix has well observed\*, gave a prompt circulation to the system of Euhemerus. The most judicious writers were not exempt from the general prejudice.

Diodorus Siculus adopted, without restriction, the ideas of the Philosopher of Messene<sup>2</sup>. Cicero himself does not appear unfriendly to them, although he has taken care not to speak in his own name†; and the fathers of the church found these opinions so favourable to their designs, that they allowed them to subsist.

But of all the ancient authorities in favour of this system, the most important seems that of Herodotus; who tells us, in the first book of his history, that the Persians had not erected any statues in honour of their divinities, because they did not believe, like the Greeks, that the gods *were born of men* ‡; for thus has been gene-

\* Recherches sur les Mysteres, p. 519.

† De Nat. Deor. *passim*.

‡ Clio, cap. 131.

rally understood the word ἀνθρωποφυΐας. We find, however, that Stanley, the learned editor of Æschylus, had already, in the seventeenth century, seized the true meaning of this compound, which he expresses by “*humanâ formâ præditos*\*.”

M. Larcher was the first who admitted this conjecture in his translation of Herodotus, published at Paris in the year 1802. The celebrated Warburton rejected this interpretation ; and Wesseling has not ventured to adopt it in his Latin version of Herodotus.

To us this appears the only exact interpretation ; since, if we translate, “ The Persians did not raise statues, for they did not believe that the gods had been born of men :” the sense becomes complicated and obscure ; the two members of the phrase cease to depend one upon the other ; and a forced signification is given to the root φυῆ,

\* Stanley, ad Æschyli Pers. 811.

which the dictionaries always explain by φύσις, statura, status (Βλάστησις, αὔξησις ἡλικίας, Suidas.)

It is manifest, that if Herodotus had wished to express the idea with which his translators have so long supplied him, he would have chosen some other word, one that might have conveyed his meaning in a positive and unequivocal manner.

If, on the contrary, we translate ἀνθρωποφυῆς according to Stanley's explanation, the sense becomes perfectly clear and satisfactory ; and in fact, the same passage of Herodotus informs us, that the Persians adored on the summits of mountains, the sun, the moon, and the elements. Now it is evident, that as they did not attribute the human form to the objects of their adoration, these objects escaped the statuary's art ; and therefore, that Herodotus only wished to say, that the Persians had not any images of gods, because they worshipped immaterial objects, which their

imagination did not, as that of the Greeks, embody under the human form. We shall quote, in support of this interpretation, a passage which Cicero supposes uttered by the Epicurean Velleius, and against which his adversary the Stoic does not remonstrate. "Happiness," says he, "cannot exist without virtue, nor virtue without reason, nor reason out of the human form; therefore the gods have a human form\*." We know that this idea adopted by the Greeks, was common to their poets and their philosophers. A passage from Porphyry, cited in the preceding section, shews that the Platonists themselves had adopted this principle in their mystic doctrine<sup>3</sup>.

It consequently appears, that Herodotus only intended to place that *anthropomorphism* so characteristic of the Greeks, in opposition with the immateriality of Eastern worship.

Far then from favouring *Euhemerism*,

\* De Nat. Deor. l. i. 83.

this passage, properly understood, has no relation to the historic system, designed to undermine all the foundations of the religion of the Greeks, as Cicero himself acknowledges\*. Critics of the best judgment, Freret, St<sup>c</sup> Croix, and others, have marked the character and progress of Euhemerism. If we agree to adopt generally the interpretation proposed by Stanley, and at last followed by Larcher, there will only remain of ancient authorities, the known and avowed partisans of the historic system, and the fathers interested in allowing its existence. These alone can be adduced by those who may wish to maintain that *apotheosis* was the grand secret of the mysteries : and henceforth, this doctrine will be classed among systems made *a posteriori* ; as being at once too vulgar to require concealment under so many veils, and so destructive of every abstract idea, that it never could

\* De Nat. Deor. l. i. 42.

have become the centre of any religious faith.

It is certain, that the Greeks, in confounding their religious notions with those transmitted from the East by the Phœnicians, and above all by the Egyptians, admitted into the body of their worship some local divinities, and at the same time some of those extraordinary mortals whom they honoured with the title of demi-gods<sup>4</sup>. Herodotus expressly declares, that the greatest number of the gods came from the Egyptian colonies, from Inachus, Cecrops, and Danaus ; but that there were several also which came from the Pelasgians, and some that the Pelasgians had borrowed from other nations\*.

The class of demi-gods was produced by some national heroes in the number of Pelasgian divinities ; and these, undoubtedly may be considered as belonging to history. And under this point of view,

\* Herodot. l. ii. 50—52.

we are authorised in saying that some of the gods were men deified; but it is contrary to sound reason, as to all the notions of antiquity, that we should suppose the *Deus optimus maximus*, the *Dii majorum gentium*, to have ever been in the class of deified mortals. To seek in historical explanation a clue which may lead through the maze of the religious opinions of the ancients, we have already pronounced an absurd undertaking; for by saying that these Grecian divinities, formed on the model of Oriental gods, might represent personages who had once existed either in the East or in Egypt, we merely elude the question, but do not solve it: besides, in attributing such an origin to polytheism, we should acknowledge ourselves wholly ignorant of the elements which compose it.

The polytheism of the Greeks having been formed by degrees, was of course the most flexible and least determinate of all the religious systems, and accordingly pre-

sents many contradictory circumstances. We strive in vain to reconcile the popular traditions with those of the poets. The inhabitants of Arcadia or of Crete, may have boasted in turn that their respective countries had given birth to Jupiter; yet none of them could possibly prove that Jupiter had been a person deified\*. We may account for a still greater increase of the confusion by considering, that the traditions concerning the gods of the ancients, being blended with the grossest *anthropomorphism*, combined but badly in the imagination of the people with the supreme power attributed to them; and if, in their highest acceptation, the gods of polytheism were actually regarded as *intermediate powers*, the vulgar must necessarily have confounded them with those personages, famous and little known, recorded in the annals of all nations.

Homer, to whom we must always recur

\* De Nat. Deor. l.iii. cap.21. ✓



when Grecian antiquities are the subject ; he, their very source, *principium et fons*, offers no indication of the doctrine of apotheosis. His gods are in their nature totally different from his heroes : although wearing the human form, they belong to an order of things infinitely more exalted : their power is unbounded<sup>5</sup>. In the father of gods and of men, causing the universe to tremble at one movement of his brow, who could seriously recognise an obscure king of Crete, whose tomb was visible in that island<sup>6</sup>? Who could, thus intentionally transform this immense and magic world into a miserable genealogy of a few unknown princes and fabulous heroes?

These considerations, with the researches already made, will perhaps be sufficient to prove, that the *historic system* is not anterior to Euhemerus<sup>7</sup>; that it is absolutely contrary to the nature of things ; and therefore that this doctrine has not been, at any period, the secret of the Eleusinian

mysteries. We may even add, that if, against historical evidence and all probabilities, we were able to prove that the doctrine of the apotheosis had been taught to the epopts of Eleusis ; yet it might on good grounds be affirmed, that such doctrine was erroneous, and inculcated perhaps, in the hope of concealing from their knowledge, by this very revelation, the true secret of the mysteries.

## SECTION VI.



THERE yet remains for us to illustrate one critical point in the picture of the mysteries ; and perhaps we are enabled, by a continued study of this branch of antiquities, to offer on the subject some new results of observation which may prove serviceable in more extensive researches.

We have already mentioned, that the mysteries of Bacchus, most interesting to develope, bear a character altogether different from that of the Eleusinian\*. This opposition strikes us at once ; and what conformity could in fact subsist between the savage licentiousness of the Bacchic

\* Sect. i. p. 6.

worship, and the severe character and the high destination of the worship of Ceres?

Yet, after a serious examination, we find that this opposition consists rather in the exterior than in the spirit of the two worships ; nay, it entirely disappears when we raise ourselves to the parent idea, the true type of the two institutions. If we do not obstinately persuade ourselves that Ceres and Bacchus were historical personages, if we consider them as originally two symbols of some power of the universe, we behold them so identified, that no other difference exists but in the exterior form ; that is, in the part depending wholly on men, on local circumstances, and the political destinies of nations.

The worship of Ceres and the worship of Bacchus must belong to one principle alone ; and this principle is found in the active force of nature, viewed in the immense variety of its functions and its attributes.

But the *myth* or story of Bacchus has been, as all mythographers allow, the most fruitful source of uncertainties, contradictions, and obscurities. In this state of things, the most incontestable point is that of his origin. Herodotus formally assures us that Bacchus came from Egypt, and that he was the same as Osiris\*. The learned Freret has well observed, that in passing from Egypt into Greece, Bacchus lost the greater part of his importance†. In Egypt Osiris was the *Demiurgic* power of the universe: when Melampus had given him the Greek name of *Dionysus*‡, and had carried him into Greece much about the same time that the vine was introduced there, the employment of the new god was limited to the superintendence of the vineyard. This circumstance tends to prove the important truth, that we must

\* Lib. ii. cap. 47, 48.

† Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript. tom. xxiii. p. 258.

‡ Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 47.

not seek to establish evident relations between the different symbols of polytheism; they vary, and are divided in proportion as they develop themselves, whilst the more nearly we ascend towards their origin, the more the masses become grand and imposing.

We have before remarked, that nothing is more confused than the *myths* of Bacchus. It is however allowed, that three Bacchuses may be distinguished as different among themselves; and who, in our opinion, are nothing more than three successive representations of the same idea, that is, of Osiris.

The ancient and modern mythographers, are all at variance respecting even the classification of their three Bacchuses.

The most ancient poets indicate no more than one; later writers have divided between three Bacchuses, the different actions which by the ancient poets were, confusedly heaped on the same head.

Diodorus Siculus acknowledges three ; but he places in this number the Indian Bacchus, very unjustly denominated Bacchus ; and he omits the mystical Iacchus\*. Finally, Nonnus of Panopolis, who had particularly and profoundly studied the *myths* of Bacchus, recognises three without the Indian<sup>1</sup>. An examination of all these varieties would divert us too far from the present subject ; and we may perhaps hereafter devote a separate essay to the *myths* of Bacchus. Meanwhile we shall notice what concerns the three Bacchuses, according to the classification which may be made of them, from the result of all the opinions and various doctrines on the subject.

*The first Bacchus is Zagreus*, whom Jupiter, when transformed into a dragon, had by Proserpine. This is proved by the scholiast of Pindar†, and the author of

\* Lib. iii. cap. 41.

† Isthm. viii. 3. ed. Heynii, tom. ii. p. 847.

the great Etymologicon (in the word *Zagreus*). Arrian describes Iacchus as the son of Jupiter and Proserpine\*; but he evidently confounds him with Zagreus. This first copy of Osiris approaches most nearly to the original. The forms of the *myth* still exhibit an Egyptian stiffness. Torn by the Titans, Bacchus Zagreus perfectly corresponds to Osiris killed by Typhon; but the traditions respecting Zagreus are very obscure, and the confusion extreme. He presided at the Dionysiacs or mysteries of Bacchus, and even appeared in the Sabasian festivals†. This employ the more particularly suited him as being the most ancient and oriental of the three Bacchuses.

*The second Bacchus* is well known as the son of Jupiter and Semele: he is also entitled the Theban, and the Conqueror. Of this Bacchus, the forms are more *hel-*

\* De Exped. Alex. l. ii. cap. 16.

† Clem. Alexandr. Protrept. p. 24.



*lenised*: he completes, for the Greeks, the representation of the primitive idea; but has no other relation with the preceding than as his successor in the mythological cycle. Nor had the second *Bacchus* any direct relation with Ceres, which shows that the union of the mysteries did not take place until a late period<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, *the third Bacchus* is the Iacchus of Eleusis; who seems to have been imagined only that he might consecrate, in some degree, the alliance between the secret worship of Bacchus and that of Ceres, towards which all the mysteries tended. Iacchus is the symbol of this association: his only destination having been already fulfilled by his birth, the *myth* has remained imperfect; it is the most vague of all. Nonnus represents him as son of the second Bacchus by the nymph Aura. Others describe him as the son of Jupiter by Ceres or by Proserpine, which confirms our hypothesis, but gives

occasion, in another point of view, to confound him with Bacchus Zagreus. He is the Iacchus who appeared on the sixth day of the mysteries at Eleusis, he is the Διόνυσος ἐπὶ τῷ μαστῷ of Suidas (in *Ιακχος*.)

From all these premises we infer, that the mysteries of Bacchus have been at an unknown epoch united to the mysteries of Ceres. And this hypothesis appears to us well founded, as far as we can flatter ourselves with the hopes of approaching truth by a path absolutely conjectural.

Let us first consider how the young Iacchus is employed in the Eleusinian mysteries. “On the sixth day,” says St<sup>e</sup> Croix, “the young Iacchus was carried in ceremony from the Ceramicus to Eleusis: it appears,” adds he, “from the hymn which, according to Aristophanes, was sung by the initiated, that they invited Iacchus in their songs, to join in their dances, and to , serve as interpreter between them and

Ceres\*.” The statue of the god was afterwards carried back to Athens<sup>3</sup>.

This sixth day, consecrated to Iacchus was the most celebrated of all. But it requires very little reflection to perceive, that this procession, subsequently so famous, was at first only an addition, foreign to the mysteries of Eleusis; it had not in fact any relation with the basis of the mysteries, as may easily be ascertained: but this procession reveals incontestably, the association of the secret worship of Bacchus to the mysteries of Ceres.

The writers who have hitherto discussed this subject have not considered it in this point of view, solely because they had not classed the three Bacchuses, and obstinately refused to acknowledge the three as so many copies of one and the same type. Several mythographers have endeavoured to distinguish between Bacchus and Iacchus; but this attempt

\* *Recherches sur les Mysteres*, p. 200.

has been useless. It is manifest, that the three Bacchuses are *successive* imitations of the same model, imitations adapted to the spirit of the times, and to the local situation of Greece.

The identity of Bacchus and Iacchus being once proved, a considerable light diffuses itself over all the relations of the ancient mystagogy. The mysteries of Greece, should, without doubt, all tend towards Eleusis, considered as the true depository and centre of all the polytheistical mysticism : it is therefore clear that intimate relations must subsist between the secret modes of worship of the principal divinities ; as that of Bacchus proceeded from the same origin, and apparently from the same type, as that of Eleusis, the Dionysian must have easily connected themselves with the mysteries of Ceres. There is in the employment of Iacchus, so distinct from the basis of the Eleusinian mysteries, something which

rather bespeaks a later association than a perfect identity.

The idea of a *mediator* in Iacchus\*, bears every character of novelty; the ceremonies performed in honour of him, seem merely an extension of the worship of Ceres. Iacchus did not inhabit Eleusis, which may indicate that he did not essentially participate in the Eleusinian rites. All these circumstances combined, prove an union of the two worships at a given time, an union in some degree *symbolised* by the admission of Iacchus to the ceremonies of Eleusis.

We have already shown, that of the three Bacchuses, he alone who could have been attached to Ceres without derogating from his functions and physiognomy, was Iacchus. So this union being once effected, Iacchus becomes useless in the succession of the *myths* of Bacchus, and altogether lost in the worship of Ceres. It

\* Aristoph. Ran. v. 40. et seq.

is even probable, that this third Bacchus was only imagined, because the two former presented forms too determined to allow their identification with the character of another Divinity. The first, as we have observed, was too Oriental or Egyptian, the second too *hellenised*, to pass beyond the limits of their respective attributes.

A great portion of ancient mythology rests on a part of history unknown. Polytheism, like the Corinthian metal, was composed of various elements ; and among these were historical traditions : it is evident that many theogonical combinations represent nothing more than detached facts, lost in the night of time. This manner of *symbolising* memorable events, is particularly applied to all that concerns the secret worships of the different Divinities. Most of the ceremonies in use, had thus some reference either to historical epochs or certain symbols, or finally

to events of which history has not preserved any memorial.

Polytheism being divided into two great parts, the *esoterick* worship presented a multiplicity of ramifications altogether unknown to us: with the secret history of polytheism we are only acquainted by conjecture; and the religious annals of the ancient world are covered, for the greater part, with an impenetrable veil<sup>4</sup>. Let us be satisfied if we can catch a glimpse occasionally of some luminous points, less fit, indeed, to assist us in our researches, than to show the magnitude and importance of those objects decidedly inaccessible and beyond our reach. We may even be assured, that the ancients themselves were without information on several matters relating to the different characters of polytheism.

At the epoch from which history begins, the various gradations of mystagogy are so many indistinct shadows, only dis-

cernible under symbols, of which the vulgar did not comprehend the meaning. It is therefore very probable that, on this subject, such an association as we have established between Ceres and Bacchus, may hold the place of an historical demonstration.

Let us add to these inferences a strong probability that from the beginning of the Dionysiacks, the functions of the *Hieroceryx*, were fulfilled by the pontiff of Eleusis. It appears also that the *Daduchus*, who assisted at the ceremonies of the worship of Ceres, attended equally at the Dionysiacks\*: in their opinions respecting this circumstance most of the learned agree. And the proof of this fact is highly important, since it marks a singular community between the worship of Ceres and of Bacchus, from the origin of both.

We shall close our researches on this subject, and the present work, by quoting

Recherches sur les Mystères, § vii. art. 3, p. 430.



a passage from Nonnus, which fully demonstrates the union of the Bacchic worship with that of Ceres.

Καί μιν Ἐλευσινίησι θεὰ παρακάτθετο Βάκχαις.  
 Ἄμφι δὲ κοῦρον Ἰάκχον ἐκυκλώσαντο χορείη  
 Νύμφαι κισσοφόροι Μαραθωνίδες· ἀρτιτόκῃ δὲ  
 Δαίμονι νυκτιχόρευτον ἐκούφισαν Ἀθίδα πεύκην.  
 Καὶ θεὸν ἰλάσκοντο μεθ' ὕια Περσεφονείης,  
 Καὶ Σεμέλης μετὰ παῖδα· θυηπολίας δὲ Λυαίῳ  
 Ὀφιγόνῳ στήσαντο καὶ ἀρχεγόνῳ Διονύσῳ,  
 Καὶ τριτάτῳ νέον υἱὸν ἐπεσμαράγγισαν Ἰάκχῳ·  
 Καὶ τελεταῖς τρισσῇσιν ἐβακχεύθησαν Ἀθῆναι,  
 Καὶ χορὸν ὀψιτέλεστον ἀνεκρούσαντο πολῖται,  
 Ζαγρέα κυδαίνοντες ἅμα Βρομίῳ, καὶ Ἰάκχῳ \*.

“ And the goddess (*Pallas*) consigned the infant (*the third Bacchus*) to the priestesses of Eleusis. The nymphs of Marathon crowned with ivy danced around the young Iacchus,—to celebrate his birth they waved the Attick torch by night, and propitiated the god, after the son of Proserpine (*Zagreus*), and after the son of Semele (*Bacchus, the Theban*). They instituted

\* Dionys. l. xlviii. v. 958.

sacrifices in honour of the old and of the new Bacchus, and they addressed a new hymn to the third Iacchus: Athens celebrated triple mysteries, and its citizens formed a chorus in honour of Zagreus, of Bromius, and of Iacchus.”

This passage combines all the characteristics of authenticity, and alone suffices to give a solid basis to our conjectures. Those who have studied these subjects know that Nonnus, besides his poetical talents, possessed a vast fund of mythographical erudition, which he chiefly employed on the various shades of the *myth* of Bacchus. In removing from this picture the colours laid on by imagination, we shall recognise the *historical fact*, and *local tradition* that served for its canvas.

We may here, also observe, that Minerva, who delivers Iacchus to the priestesses of Eleusis, would seem, according to the poet's thought, a symbol of the city of Athens, of which she was the tutelar Di-

vinity. We have seen, in fact, that *Iacchus resided at Athens*, and was thence carried in ceremonious pomp to Eleusis, on the sixth day of the initiations. No hint, however slight, should be omitted, when the subject of discussion is so subtle and symbolical as the mystagogy of the ancients. Monsieur de Villoison has made use of the passage above quoted from the *Dionysiacks* of Nonnus\* ; but that learned Hellenist contented himself with explaining it as bearing reference to the three

\* The opinion of Monsieur de Villoison on this subject, is expressed in one of the notes which he added to the "*Recherches sur les Mystères du Paganisme*" of M. de St<sup>e</sup> Croix, and which he published under the name, but without the knowledge, of that learned antiquary. It appears that, in this note, M. de Villoison adopted the reflections of another scholar, who had written, in the margin of a copy of the *Dionysiacks*, a commentary on the passage of Nonnus above cited, in which he thus remarks: "*Nonnus certè accuratè tres Bacchos distinguit; Proserpinæ, Semeles, et Auræ filium. Alii Iacchum cum Semeles filio confundunt. Optimè Nonnus, qui tres Bacchos tribus Atheniensium Dionysiakis applicuit, quot fuisse auctores passim testantur, &c.*" (*Recherches sur les Mystères*, § iii. art. 5. p. 120.

Bacchuses. Neither has he, nor M. de St<sup>e</sup> Croix, attended to that alliance between the secret worship of Ceres and that of Bacchus ; an alliance which diffuses new light over all the history of the ancient mystagogy.





## NOTES.

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### SECTION I.

(1.) ON the mysteries of Samothrace, it is necessary to consult the ingenious dissertation of Doctor Münter, bishop of Seeland, published under the following title, “*Erklärung einer griechischen Inschrift, welche auf die Samothracischen Mysterien Beziehung hat,*” (Kopenhagen, 1810.) We therein find that the learned Zoëga, in studying ancient monuments, began to direct all his attention towards the mysteries. If death had not interrupted his labours, the monuments relating to Eleusinian antiquities would, undoubtedly, have furnished him with an ample harvest of observations. Zoëga claims particular praise for having combined all known opinions respecting the alphabetical writing of the Egyptians. The dissertations of M. Silvestre de Sacy and of M. Akerblad on the Rosetta Inscription, induced us to expect that this important subject would

soon be completely illustrated. The new researches of M. Etienne Quatremère seem to confirm this hope. The application of the Coptick language to Egyptian monuments is probably the process by means of which we may finally discover the ancient alphabet of Egypt.

(2.) If we analyse the character of the mystical ideas which the ancients attached to Bacchus, and the character of the worship of Ceres, we shall behold, on one part, a state of rudeness and wild licentiousness, and on the other, the elements of society combining themselves with the principles of laws and of order. I have endeavoured to show, however, in the Sixth Section, that the secret worship of Bacchus agrees in more than one respect with the mysteries of Ceres.

(3.) This veneration for Ceres appears in the *Thesmophorian* rites, which were celebrated by the Athenian women in the temple of Ceres—Thesmophora (or law-giver). It seems that they were called *Thesmophoria*, because, on the last day of this festival, the women carried on their heads, in full ceremony, the books of the laws. On this subject may be consulted a learned memoir by M. du Theil (*Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* tom. xxxix. p. 203). See also M. Clavier's "Histoire des premiers Temps de la Grèce," 1809, tom. i. p. 31, &c.

(4.) Ego quidem nunquam tantum mihi sumam, ut,

non dico annum, sed sæculum quo res Græcorum antiquissimæ acciderunt, definire ausim. (Meiners, Comment. Societ. reg. Scient. Gotting. vol. xvi. p. 217.) “Je dirai seulement que l’origine des mysteres remonte aux temps les plus reculés de la Grèce, et se confond avec celle de sa civilisation, et personne ne doit être assez hardi pour en fixer l’époque. La langue d’Homere n’est pas celle d’un peuple qui est sorti récemment de la barbarie. Définons nous des gens qui savent tout, et qui fixent des époques dans les immenses deserts qui precede le cercle étroit des temps bien connus : a l’ignorance seule appartient une telle hardiesse.” (*Origine de tous les Cultes*, tom. ii. part ii. p. 280.) Dupuis, without doubt, has strangely abused his erudition ; but his opinion is, nevertheless, of considerable weight, when the date of an historical event is in question.

(5.) One of the Oxford marbles (*Marmor. Oxon.* ed. Chandler, tom. ii. p. 21) places the foundation of the mysteries under the reign of Erectheus. Lami, in his notes on the first chapter of Meursius’s Eleusin. (*Op. Meursii*, tom. ii. p. 547) conjectures, that the year, half effaced on the marble, may be about 1399 before Christ. Homer is supposed to have lived 990 or 1000 years before Christ.

(6.) In speaking here of Homer’s writings, we do not comprehend the hymns generally regarded as falsely ascribed to him, and which are less the original



productions of the age of Homer than the tardy fruits of his school.

(7.) This discussion, which has much engaged the critics, is not yet, perhaps, terminated. In 1777, M. Schneider, then young, attacked the authenticity of the Orphick poetry with so much vigour, that the celebrated Ruhnkenius thought himself obliged to enter the lists. It appears, however, that he became a champion less from conviction than from an apprehension of seeing shaken the authority of a philosophical system long since established. Hermann, in an ingenious dissertation annexed to his edition of the Orphick Poems (*Orphica*, Lipsiæ, 1805, in 8vo. p. 676), says, “*Igitur neminem hac ætate tam in antiquis litteris rudem inveniri arbitror, qui cum Gesnero hæc scripta quæ Orphei nomen præ se ferunt, vel unius omnia scriptoris esse, vel dictionem habere Homericam, sibi persuadeat. Hymni quidem quin et Argonauticis et Lithicis antiquiores sint, dubitari non potest; quanquam etiam et in hymnis sunt qui recentioris ætatis non dubia contineant indicia.*”

The opinion of Hermann in this case is by so much the more decisive, as he has particularly employed himself on the Orphick fragments. Honour to the country which still possesses Heyne\*, Wolf, Hermann, and Schneider!

\* This illustrious scholar died at Gottingen on the 11th of July, 1812. A few days before his death he wrote me a last letter, in

It will excite a smile to consult, respecting Orpheus, a work printed at Paris in 1808, and entitled "*Histoire d'Homere et d'Orpheè*," by M. Delille de Sales. This author, desirous of "*instructing youth how to cultivate the arid fields of antiquity*," but who has not "*divorced himself from his heart*," speaks of the "affability and the graces of Orpheus which enchanted the Egyptian priests." He conjectures that this hero of conjugal love saved Eurydice from a disease pronounced mortal by the empiricks of that time, and that he only lost her "*pour avoir voulu se montrer époux, avant d'avoir affermi sa convalescence*." He also assures us that Orpheus was the son of a king, "*because he says so himself in his Argonauticks*:" and that he was the father of Musæus, "*so well known on account of his fine poem of Hero and Leander*." Against the exactness of this marvellous calculation, it can be proved that the poem of Musæus is not older, at most, than the fourth century of the Christian era. If this manner of studying the ancients should be imitated, we might fear that, under a new form, would revive that spirit which reigned in literature at the time when disputes were agitated concerning the ancients and moderns; deplorable and ridiculous discussions, which Fontenelle wished to terminate by a decision well worthy

which he acknowledged the receipt of this work in the most flattering terms. Of the esteem of such a man as Heyne it is allowable to be vain.

of the cause ; saying, that the whole question might be reduced to an inquiry whether the trees which grew formerly in our grounds were larger than those of the present time.

(8.) The scholiast of Apollonius Rhodius (*Argon.* i. 917) relates, that Agamemnon, uneasy at the insubordination of the Greeks before Troy, caused himself to be initiated ; and that Ulysses had also been initiated at Samothrace : but this evidence is of no weight, and cannot counterpoise the silence of Homer. The total absence of mystick ideas in Homer, appears to me, besides, an additional proof of the scrupulous fidelity with which the *Rhapsodists* and *Diascevests* (the compilers) have treated, in a historical point of view, the primitive tradition. The imitators of Homer, as we see in the instance of Quintus Smyrnæus, have taken the utmost pains to preserve the Homerick colouring.

## SECTION II.



(1.) ON this subject see the five memoirs of Abbé Mignot (*Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* tom. xxxi.), wherein that learned academician combats with singular force the hypothesis, which makes Egypt the centre of civilisation. He proves, that the Indians never went to seek instruction or information in Egypt. We cannot too much admire the sagacity with which this author has divined, as it may be said, the new discoveries : if he had understood the Sanscrit, and possessed the materials of which we can now avail ourselves, he would have completed his work by demonstrating, that the Egyptians have borrowed all from Asia. Some trifling differences in religious worship or civil policy need not detain us : it is clear that in every country local notions and customs become blended with foreign ideas, and often pervert or misrepresent them.

(2.) It is very remarkable, that the priest of Saïs, who is introduced as a speaker in Plato's dialogue entitled *Timæus*, begins the history of his country by

that of the Atlantis. Bailly had already made this observation. This is a formal proof that the Egyptians knew themselves to be not *Autochthones*: which, however, does not demonstrate that they were acquainted with their true origin. The Egyptian priests were considered as an Asiatick colony even among the ancients. Zonaras says, speaking of the science of the Egyptians, Ἐκ Χαλδαίων γὰρ λέγεται φοιτῆσαι ταῦτα πρὸς Αἴγυπτον, κακεῖθεν πρὸς Ἑλλάδας—“It is said that these things came from Chaldea into Egypt, and thence into Greece.” (*Ed. du Cange*, Venet. 1729, tom. i. p. 14.)

(3.) Eusebius preserves a fact which has not hitherto been adduced, and which proves the ancient relations between India and Egypt. (*Præp. Evang.* l. iii. p. 115.) Τὸν Δημιουργόν, ὃν Κνήφ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι προσαγορεύουσιν, — τὴν — χροιάν ἐκ κυανοῦ μέλανος ἔχοντα, κρατοῦντα ζώνην καὶ σκῆπτρον (λέγουσιν). That is, “The Egyptians represented the Demiourgos Kneph of a blue colour, inclining to black, with a girdle and a sceptre.” It is impossible not to recognise in this image the Indian *Vishnù*. In the mythology of the Hindûs, says Wilford (*Asiatick Researches*, vol. iii. p. 571), Brahma’s complexion is red, Vishnu’s dark blue, and Hara’s white. We know, besides, from the *Puranas*, that Egypt was under the special protection of Vishnù. Wilford adds, “Osiris of a black complexion is Vishnù.” (*As. Res.* vol. xi. p. 94.) It must be observed, that the title of Kneph has been often confounded

with the name of Osiris; that the title of Iswara has been confounded with the name of Brahma, Vishnù, and Siva, as we shall see hereafter. Without attaching much importance to etymological deductions, may not some analogy be discovered between the Greek word *κνέφας*, which signifies *obscurity* (whence is derived the verb *κνεφάζω*, *I make dark*), and the Egyptian name of Kneph, *the dark or black god*? It is affirmed that *Kneph* signified in Egyptian *the good genius*, the *αγαθοδαίμων* of the Greeks and Phœnicians. See Gale, in Jamblich. p. 301.

(4.) “If we consider the Egyptian *Osiris* not as a name but as a title of supremacy, which each sect, as their doctrines became in turn the established religion of the country, applied exclusively to the object of their worship; and if we consider it as the same with the Sanscrit *Iswara* (the Supreme Lord), it will greatly illustrate the identity of the religions of *Egypt* and *Hindustàn*, by a close coincidence of historical fact. The three great attributes of the Deity had, in course of time, been erected into distinct Deities, and mankind had divided into sects; some attaching themselves to *Brahma*, some to *Vishnù*, and others to *Siva*. The contention of schismatics from the same stock is always more inveterate than where the difference is total: the sect of *Brahma* claimed exclusive pre-eminence for the object of their choice, as being *the creative power*, the *Iswara*, or ‘Supreme Lord.’ The

two other sects joined against the followers of *Brahma*, and obtained so complete a victory, as to abolish totally that worship: the sect of *Siva* being the most powerful, rendered theirs the established religion, and claimed for *Siva* in his turn the exclusive title of *Isvara*. The sect of *Vishnù*, or *Heri*, at length emerged from its obscurity; and, in concert with the followers of the *Sacti*, or female power, destroyed and abolished the sect and worship of *Siva*: thus *Vishnù*, or *Heri*, became the *Isvara*, and his worship the established religion. This seems to have been the case in *Egypt*: for, if we substitute the name of *Osiris* for *Brahma*, *Horus* for *Vishnù*, or *Heri*, *Typhon* for *Siva*, and *Isis* for the female principle, the history agrees in all its parts." (Paterson on the Origin of the Hindu Religion, As. Res. vol. viii. p. 44.) The ascertaining of this affinity is by so much the more important, as it accounts for all the variations discovered both in the Indian and Egyptian *myths*.

(5.) The learned Le Clerc (*Bibl. Univ.* tom. vi. p. 87) believed these words to be Phœnician, and explained them as signifying "*to watch and abstain from evil.*" Court de Gebelin (*Monde Prim.* tom. iv. p. 323) interprets them thus, "*Assembled people, lend your ears, or listen:*"—he derived them from the Hebrew. The celebrated Barthèlemy, when consulted by Larcher, the translator of Herodotus, replied (in 1766), that these words, foreign to the Greek language, appeared

to him Egyptian, because the mysteries of Eleusis must have come from Egypt; and that, respecting their signification, he was obliged to acknowledge his ignorance. (*Voyage d'Anacharsis*, tom. v. notes, p. 538.)

(6.) The original passage of Hesychius, in the word Κόγξ ὀμπαξ, is as follows: Ἐπιφώνημα τετελεσμένοις, καὶ τῆς δικαστικῆς ψήφου ἤχος, ὡς ὁ τῆς κλεψύδρας. Παρὰ δὲ Ἀττικῶις, βλόψ. (*Ed. Alberti*, vol. ii. p. 290.) Under the word Παξ, Hesychius explains παξ by τέλος ἔχειν, where Tollius would read λέγειν. Funges, one of the annotators, says, “Vox παξ, quatenus silentium significat, plane est Græca (?) non Romana. Cum enim silentium imponebant, aut quæ dicta erant, indicta vellent, tunc παξ dicebant. Extant sane hæc Diphili: (Athen. *Deipnos*. Ep. l. ii. c. 26:)

Δειπνῆι τε καταδῶς, πῶς δοκεῖς; Λακωνικῶς.

\*Οἷους δὲ κοτύλην. Πάξ. Τί πάξ;

*Falluntur qui admirationem eo significari volunt.* According to Scaliger, this word was used to impose silence, the finger being placed on the mouth; and a conversation was terminated by παξ. *Cum ex sermone præsentēs dimitterent, tum παξ dicebant.* (Auson. *Tollii*, p. 499.) Many passages from the comick Latin writers attest the sense of this exclamation, and the manner of employing it. Thus a verse of Terence (*Heauton*. Act. IV. Sc. III. v. 39):

*Unus est dies, dum argentum eripio: pax! nihil amplius.*



See also verse 50 of the same play: and in Plautus, *Mil. Glor.* Act. III. Sc. I. v. 213. *Pseud.* Act. V. Sc. I. v. 33. *Stich.* Act. V. Sc. VII. in fin. *Trinum.* Act. IV. Sc. II. v. 94; where Saumaise very unnecessarily would read *tax*, making, by a false analogy, *pax* proceed from *pago*, and *tax* from *tago*. The word *pax* was preserved till the time of Ausonius. See the work entitled *Grammaticomastix*, at the end (ed. Tollii, p. 495). The Greek derivatives of this word are, 1°. Πυπαξ, equivalent to the Latin *papa*, expressing astonishment or admiration, whence is formed the verb πυππάζειν, employed by Aristophanes (*Equit.* 677).—2°. Ἐπίπαξ, or ἐπιταξ, which, according to some commentators, signified *successively*, or *in order*, or, as Hesychius explains it, “*on the left*.”—3°. Ἀπόπαξ, which is rendered by ξύμπαν and παντελῶς.

Professor Morgenstern of Dorpat has quoted, in the Journal which he publishes (*Dörpatische Beyträge*, 1814, p. 462), a passage of Cicero (*Somn. Scip.* c. 2), thus expressed, according to the text of Ernesti: “*Hic cum exclamasset Lælius, ingemissentque cæteri vehementius, leniter arridens Scipio, Quæso, inquit, ne me e somno excitetis et parum rebus: audite cætera.*” In this passage, which had escaped my notice when I published the first two editions of this Essay, the words *parum rebus* are evidently corrupted. Aldus relates, that in two manuscripts they were replaced by *pax sit rebus*, which words have been adopted in

some editions. Grævius proposed to read, "*Quæso, inquit, ne me e somno excitetis. Pax! verum audite cætera.*" Bouhier prefers *parumper* to *verum*. M. Morgenstern conjectures, with much appearance of truth, that the word *pax*, which the copyists believed to be a corrupted reading, has been blended with the first syllable of *parumper*; and that the last, by a false collocation of letters, has been transformed into *rep*, or *reb*; whence *rebus*. This passage of Cicero confirms the explanation which I have proposed of the word *pax*.\* It is desirable that those who have opportunities of consulting manuscripts should take the trouble to examine such passages of different authors as contain the word *pax*, which has almost always been thrown out from the printed texts. The prose writers would probably offer an abundant harvest, as the measure of verse renders the exclusion of a word difficult and bold, while prose easily suffers the most capricious attempts.

The word *koux* has not passed the threshold of the temple of Eleusis: but the destiny of the word *pax* is very singular. While its origin and true mystical signification were, perhaps, not known but in the interior of the sanctuary of Ceres, this word, equally

\* [Ramus has adopted the reading of Aldus's MSS. *pax sit rebus*, and interprets it by *tacete*. Gronovius argues against it, but apparently without reason. We must observe that Planudes found the same reading in his copy; for he translates—*ἀλλ' εἰρήνη ἥτω* (read *ἔστω*) *τοῖς πράγμασιν, ὥς ἀκούσαι καὶ τὰ λυπρά.*]—PARIS ED.

foreign to the language of Greece as of Rome, had penetrated into the habitual life of the nations of antiquity. Placed last in the famous *formula*, it thence, apparently, contracted the signification of *end*, connected with that of *silence*. Every thing, besides, conspired to attach an idea of *discretion* and of *mystery* to this exclamation. It was under these false acceptations that it circulated, and became established in the ancient languages, and even in our modern dialects: for the word *pax* is, in this sense, without doubt, the origin of *paix*, used in French as an expression equivalent to *silence*!

Anquetil du Perron has observed, that the word which Theodore of Mopsuesta (*Photii Bibl.* ed. of Rouen, 1693, p. 199) translates by *τύχη*, *fortune*, is *bakht*, a Zend word, preserved in the Persian, and signifying *fortune*, or *destiny*. As the Sanscrit and the Zend have many roots in common, the word *bakht* is seemingly the Sanscrit *Pakscha*, which in the vulgar dialects is transformed, as Wilford says, into *Vakht*, or *Vakhs*, bearing the same signification as the Zend word.

To prove still more clearly the identity of *Canscha* and of *Pakscha* with the words *κῶγξ* and *παξ*, it may be observed, that the two Sanscrit words are commonly pronounced *Cansch* and *Paksch*. Every consonant in the *Devanagari* alphabet is supposed to contain an inherent vowel, which is expressed with sufficient accuracy by *a* short, and which is neces-

sarily pronounced in reading Sanscrit, unless some particular mark be added under the letter: thus *Parāma* is pronounced *Param*, when the sign or mark is added to the final letter.

This rule is observed in the Bhákha, or Bhásha, the Pracrit, and the Bengali; only that, in the vulgar dialects, the inherent vowel of a final consonant is almost always omitted: so that, in Pracrit, one of the gods is called *Rām*, and not *Rama*, as in Sanscrit; and *Gīt Govind* (a fine poem, by Jaya Deva, on the loves of Crishna and Rhadi), as pronounced in Bengali, must necessarily be *Gita Govinda* in Sanscrit.

We shall offer another observation. If, on the one hand, it were desirable that, in Wilford's explanation, the word  $\delta\mu\pi\alpha\xi$  should correspond to a *single* Sanscrit word; on the other hand it may be objected, that a formula of such high abstraction, composed of *three* words, is much more in the spirit of the philosophy of numbers, as we see that it retraces, in some degree, the favourite and characteristick idea of the Trinity in Unity. It is useless to add, that the Greeks might easily have written in two words, what at first had been divided into three.

These considerations, undoubtedly, give some additional interest to Wilford's conjecture: but, however ingenious may be his explanation, we do not undertake to decide, by means of it, whether the mysteries were originally Indian, or whether India borrowed

them from some other country of the East. Neither do we undertake to determine whether the *exterior form* of the mysteries, such as we know them, does not belong exclusively to Greece; which may perfectly agree with our hypothesis respecting their true origin. Similar researches would, in general, have no other result than vain hypotheses. It would be a more important object to seek traces of the mysteries in the religious system of the Indians. Except the formula explained by Wilford, we know not that any vestiges of similar institutions have been discovered among them. We may hope, it is true, that the peace which now unites the whole world will give fresh activity to the English *Indianists*. What had been done, during the space of seven or eight years, by the English, had been almost wholly unknown to us. We see, with admiration and surprise, the continued developement of Oriental studies, both in England and among the English in their Indian settlements. This is sufficiently proved by a prodigious number of dictionaries and grammars, the printing of original texts, and, above all, the flourishing state of the college founded in 1800 at Fort William, in Calcutta. Let us hope that the learned men of every European country will unite with those of England in promoting the advancement of general knowledge: it is the patrimony of all and of each. Germany, which has deserved so well of the human mind, will not

withhold her contribution. In the midst of political convulsions, she preserved unextinguished on the continent of Europe the torch of Grecian and Oriental philology; and will not relinquish the brightest ornament of her literary crown. Louis the XVIIIth, who has known the value of literature in adversity, has founded in the "College de France" two new professorships, one of Sanscrit, the other of Chinese; which nearly completes the course of study in the Special School, established near the Bibliothèque du Roi in Paris. This example will be speedily followed: a noble emulation will be the result of such united efforts. I had already ventured to form this wish at an epoch when it might have appeared chimerical. The hopes mentioned in my first Essay (published in 1810), under the title of "*Projet d'une Academie Asiatique*," are, perhaps, on the eve of being realised. I cannot close this article without offering the homage of my public thanks to M. Langlès, so well known by his numerous and extensive labours, and by the rare liberality of his literary principles, for the honourable and flattering manner in which he has noticed my *Projet d'une Academie Asiatique*, when he was enjoined by the third class of the Institute of France to examine this work, as he himself has declared in a number of the *Mercur*e *Etranger*.

## SECTION III.



(1.) It is very remarkable, that most of the ancient theologies commence with a fall which follows a combat. The first event of Indian tradition is the struggle between Brahma and Mahadeva, which terminates with the fall of the former. Osiris was killed by Typhon, in Egypt. Isis avenges the death of her husband by an obstinate battle with the murderer of Osiris. We know that Typhon was the evil principle (Plut. de *Iside et Osiride*, p. 113, et seq.), as Isis was Nature personified, the universal goddess, φύσις παναίολος, πάντων μήτηρ. (Gruter, *Inscript.* p. xxvi. 10.) I do not presume to establish a system on these circumstances : but let it be added, that the most ancient religious ceremonies have been expressive of grief and lamentation; that Adonis was the subject of mourning in Phœnicia, as Osiris in Egypt; that Adonis and Osiris are proved to have been the same personage (Selden de *Diis Syr.* syntagma II. *Eundem enim Osiridem et Adonin intelligunt omnes*); that their festivals, exactly alike, were divided into three parts;

the loss or disappearance, ἀφανισμὸς—the search, ζήτησις—and the finding, εὕρεσις: we shall then, perhaps, discover in these *myths* and usages, the traces of one of those great religious traditions which have diffused themselves every where. It is evident that, far from being preserved in their purity, these traditions were soon confounded with the doctrine of two coexisting principles; a doctrine which has been the foundation of almost all the religious and philosophical ideas of the ancients. The explanations which have hitherto been given of these primitive *myths*, are neither so unobjectionable nor so satisfactory as to preclude new conjectures.

(2.) That which chiefly opposes the investigation of the most simple mythological facts, is the multiplicity of systems established by various writers on the religious system of the ancients. It may, without doubt, be explained by means altogether opposite, and in a manner sufficiently plausible: thus, some have referred it wholly to agriculture—others to astronomy—some to history. We learn, from the example of Euhemerus (*Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* tom. viii. p. 107), that the ancients had already given themselves up to commentaries of this kind. These different modes of explaining the same mythological system proceed, almost always, from the changes which the symbols have undergone. Polytheism was essentially figurative. A great number of religious practices



represented the same moral or historical notion ; and this was often expressed in different places by different symbols. Thus, every where are found traces of the solar worship ; and, in fact, many of the symbols relate to the source of light and of fecundity : but the sun itself was only the greatest and most ancient symbol of the Divinity, received among all nations. So that if these symbols and monuments sometimes designated a worship rendered to the material sun, still more frequently do they testify that the idea of God's unity and immateriality was preserved in the midst of polytheism, perhaps without the knowledge of the polytheists. We must not, then, stop at the first explanation offered : we must examine whether the idea explained may not itself comprehend another idea. Without this precaution, the most serious errors and most incoherent systems are quickly multiplied.

(3.) There are many dangers to be avoided in the study of antiquity. Next to the misapplication of etymology, nothing is more deplorable than the abuse of historical comparisons ; a rage for which has bewildered the most learned men. Thus, the famous Bishop of Avranches discovered a perfect analogy between Moses and Adonis—Fourmont, between the patriarch Jacob and the Typhon of the Égyptians—Fra. Paolino da San. Bartolomeo, between Menù, the Indian legislator, and Noah. We must not here for-

get the protestant minister Croese, who, in a bulky work entitled "*Homerus Hebraeus*," has demonstrated that Homer's heroes are all personages celebrated in the Bible. According to him, it appears, from a thousand circumstances, that Ulysses with the nymph Calypso is Lot with his daughters.

(4.) *Non semel quædam sacra traduntur : Eleusis servat quod ostendat revisentibus. Rerum natura sacra sua non simul tradit : initiatos nos credimus ; in vestibulo ejus hæremus. Illa arcana non promiscue nec omnibus patent ; reducta et in interiore sacrario clausa sunt.* (Senec. *Quæst. nat.* vii. cap. 31.) Plato, to express how few had penetrated the true sense of the initiations, thus says, Εἰσι γὰρ δὴ, φασὶν οἱ περὶ τὰς τελετὰς, ταρβηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, Βάκχοι δὲ τε παῦροι. (In *Phædon*. § 13.)

(5.) The grand principle on which polytheism rested, was, as the learned Warburton has ably proved, the admission of all religious ideas. "The Master of the universe," says Themistius, "seems pleased with this diversity in the forms of worship : he wishes that the Egyptians should adore him in one manner, the Greeks in another, the Syrians after a third fashion ; and even all the Syrians do not observe the same mode of worship." (*Orat.* xii. ed. Hardouin. p. 160, A.)

(6.) The temple of Ceres at Eleusis was held in such respect, that even Xerxes, the declared enemy of the gods of Greece, and the destroyer of their temples, spared it, if we may believe Aristides. (*Orat.*

*Eleus.* tom. i. p. 451, C.) Alaric completely overthrew it in the year of Christ 396. The priests were dispersed: many fell beneath the sword of the barbarians—some died of grief: among these was the celebrated Priscus of Ephesus, then ninety years old, who had once been a favourite of the Emperor Julian. (Le Beau, *Hist. du Bas-Empire*, tom. vi. p. 48.) M. d'Ansse de Villoison copied several inscriptions at Eleusis. (*Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* tom. xlvii. p. 283, et seq.) M. de Chateaubriand explored the ruins of Eleusis where at present is situate the place called Leptina. It does not appear that the eloquent traveller was much struck by the beauty of those ruins. (*Itineraire de Paris à Jerusalem*, tom. i. p. 157—163.)

(7.) Count Stolberg, to whom, undoubtedly, all must allow a high degree of piety and considerable information, has adopted, in his excellent History of the Christian Religion, that hypothesis which transports into the East the germ of Grecian mysteries; and deduces them from the first revealed notions. (*Erster Band, vierte Beylage; über die Quellen morgenländischer Ueberlieferungen*, 438—473.)

(8.) The secret of the mysteries was never revealed but by some persons, who thereby became instantly devoted to death and the public execration (*Meurs. in Eleus.* cap. 20); for the loss of life and the confiscation of property did not satisfy the law: a column, exposed to every eye, perpetuated the memory of

their crime and punishment. (*Voyage d'Anach.* tom. v. chap. 58.) Opinion, more strong than law, repressed the guilty. Horace, who was *parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens*, says,

—*Vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum*  
*Vulgarit arcanæ, sub îsdem*  
*Sit trabibus, fragilemve mecum*  
*Solvat phaselum.*

LIB. III. 2—26.

Æschylus, accused of having revealed some part of the mysteries, only escaped from popular resentment by proving that he had not been initiated. (Clem. *Strom.* ii. 416.) A reward was offered for the head of Diagoras. We find in Plutarch an account of all that befel Alcibiades, in consequence of having imitated the ceremonies of the mysteries. Aristotle was accused of impiety by the Hierophant, under pretence that he had profaned the mysteries of Ceres in sacrificing, after the rites of Eleusis, to Pythias, adoptive daughter of the eunuch Hermias, who governed Lydia in the Persian monarch's name. In consequence of this accusation, Aristotle retired to Chalcis in Eubœa, where he died. (Diogen. Laert. *in Aristot.*)

(9.) Barthèlemy agrees nearly with Warburton in the explanation which he gives of the mysteries. (*Voyage d'Anach.* tom. v. chap. 68.) In a note at the

end of that volume, after having proved the interpolation of the Palinody ascribed to Orpheus, he adds, "En otant a Warburton ce moyen si victorieux, je ne pretends pas attaquer son opinion sur le secret des mystères, qui me paroît fort vraisemblable."

(10.) Stark (*über die Myst.* cap. v. p. 76) conjectures, that Socrates had refused to be initiated from an apprehension that, in discovering the great truths of philosophy, he might be accused of betraying the doctrine of the mysteries. This ingenious hypothesis establishes a great conformity between the secret object of the mysteries and that of the philosophers. But this conformity may be doubted. Philosophy had also her esoterick doctrine, which must, however, have consisted rather in bold speculations than in religious traditions. Philosophy and the mysteries coincided in their common contempt for the popular worship: but the opposition of philosophy and mystagogy on every other point was, nevertheless, a positive fact. The Socrates of Plato is generally regarded as a personage completely *idealised*. This observation is confirmed by those praises of the mysteries which Plato supposes his master so frequently to utter: witness two beautiful passages of the *Phædo*. (Plat. *Opp.* tom. i. ed. Bip. p. 140—157.)

(11.) "I have seen," says Dionysius of Halicarnassus, "all the persons assembled in theatres ex-

press at once their disapprobation at a false movement, or an error in pronounciation." (*De Compos. Verb.* inter opera Diony. Halic. tom. ii. p. 17, ed. Huds. Oxon. 1704.)

## SECTION IV.



(1.) "FOR we can assign," says Warburton, "no surer *cause* of the horrid abuses and corruptions of the mysteries (besides time, which naturally and fatally depraves and vitiates all things), than the SEASON in which they were represented; and the profound SILENCE in which they were buried. For *night* gave opportunity to wicked men to attempt evil actions; and *secrecy*, encouragement to repeat them: and the inviolable nature of that secrecy which encouraged abuses, kept them from the magistrate's knowledge so long, till it was too late to reform them." (Div. Legat. of Moses, vol. i. book ii. sect. 4, p. 190, ed. 1755.)

(2.) Apollonius Tyanæus, without belonging to any particular school, was, nevertheless, a very active personage in the grand system of opposition. Respecting Apollonius, it is said by Gibbon, that we cannot at present determine whether he was a sage, an impostor, or a fanatic. His life, written by Philostratus, is a tissue of traditions and fables, yet a work not devoid of interest.

(3.) The Platonists, such as Plotinus and Porphyry, have maintained, that Ammonius Saccas, born in the Christian religion, became a convert to polytheism. Eusebius and Saint Jerome affirm that he persevered in the Christian faith. Among modern writers, Brucker joins with the Platonists. The pious and learned Le Nain de Tillemont adopts the sentiments of the Christian doctors. Mosheim thought that Ammonius had blended the Christian religion with Eclectism.

(4.) There are two Celsuses—both Epicureans: one flourished under Nero; the other under Hadrian and his successors. This latter Celsus wrote, against Christianity, a work which Origen refuted.

(5.) This symbol is of the highest antiquity. The Indians have always employed it. Fra. Paolino da San. Bartolomeo has published (from the Borgian Museum), in his *Systema Brahmanicum*, a *Yoni (matrix)*, under the figure of a triangle in a lotos flower. See on the Indian symbols a fragment of Porphyry, quoted by Stobæus, in *Eclog. Phys.* l.i. cap. 4, § 56, and inserted in the *Porphyry* of Holstenius, p. 182.

(6.) A protestant divine of the seventeenth century accuses the Pythagoreans and Platonists, down to Marsilius Ficinus inclusively, of having been able sorcerers, and very familiar with the devil. (See Colberg's *Platonisch-Hermetisches Christenthum*, Frkf. und Leîpzig, 1690, tom. i. p. 168, et seqq.) It must be observed, that the doctrine of the Platonists continued



long in full vigour. Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, *Gemistus Pletho*, one of the last among them, undertook to establish a new system of religion in the taste of his masters. Gennadius, the patriarch of Constantinople, having censured this work, consigned it to the flames. A manuscript preserved in the Bibliothèque du Roi contains a letter, wherein the patriarch exposes the doctrine of Pletho: nothing more of it remains. See, respecting this manuscript, a curious but too succinct dissertation, by M. Boivin. (*Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* tom. ii. p. 715.) Gemistus Pletho was placed at the head of the *Platonick Academy* founded at Florence by Cosmo de Medici. (See Heeren's *Gesch. der Class. Litt.* tom. ii. p. 35, et seq. and Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo di Medici*, 1806, vol. i. p. 49.)

(7.) A continued perusal of the new Platonists will evince the truth of the picture which I here only present under its principal features. Every thing conspires to render such a course of reading difficult: the nature of the subject—the loftiness and the obscurity of style—the scantiness of materials—the diversity of opinions; even the indifference of criticism respecting the materials which we still possess. There is but one Greek edition of Plotinus (that of Bâle, 1580); one of Proclus, printed in a style of mediocrity at Hamburg (1618); one of Jamblichus, with the notes of Th. Gale (Oxford, 1678). Porphyry and Maximus Tyrius have

been more frequently printed : one of the most complete editions of the former is that by Lucas Holstenius (Cambridge, 1685). We have many editions of Maximus Tyrius, from the first, by Henry Stephens (1557), to the last, published by Reiske (1774). To these we must necessarily add the Emperor Julian's writings, which have not been wholly reprinted since the appearance of Spanheim's edition (in 1696); and a selection of fragments found in Libanius and Themistius : of the former there have been several editors. But all these works, as those of the other Platonists, are rare and costly : the typographical execution is not always handsome nor correct ; and the reader is generally disappointed in the criticism of the old editors. In fact, we still want a *Collection of the Platonists*. Such a work, under the direction of distinguished scholars, and enriched by the helps which we now possess, would constitute an epoch in the study of literature and of philosophy. *Exoriare aliquis.\**

(8.) M. Gorres, author of the work entitled *Mythengeschichte der Asiatischen Welt* (Heidelberg, 1810), has made some attempts in this way : but to me they seem premature. We find, in the *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions* (tom. xlvii. p. 53), that an academician,

\* M. Creuzer, professor at Heidelberg, is engaged in preparing a complete edition of Plotinus ; and the specimen which he has published encourages us to expect much from his labours. A young native of Strasburg, M. Heyler, is employed on Julian,

named M. l'Abbé Fenel, flattered himself with the notion of having discovered, in the works of Plato and of his reputed disciples, the new Platonists, the secret of the ancient mysteries. He had read some remarks on this subject to the academy; but they have never been printed. The principle adopted by Abbé Fenel, must, necessarily, have led him into error. We might, perhaps, have obtained some *collateral* researches of great value; but the main question would have been obscured by an additional system.

The fourth volume of M. Creuzer's work (*Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*) did not reach me until long after the first edition of this Essay had been published. Whatever may be the learning and talents of that author, I have been able to make but little use of his researches on the Eleusinian mysteries. Not only is the object which he had in view totally opposite to mine, but the very foundations of our conjectures are different. In the mysteries of Eleusis, M. Creuzer thinks he can discern the contest of *Spirit and Matter*. He discovers, also, many points of contact between Ceres and Bacchus: but they are altogether foreign to those which I have noticed in the Sixth Section of this work. While I object, however, to some of M. Creuzer's ideas, the novelty of his opinions, and the singular sagacity which appears in most of his combinations, must be acknowledged.

See, among others, some very remarkable observations on the knowledge which the Platonists possessed of the mysteries, and of the notions respecting them which they have been able to communicate (tom. iv. p. 549—554): but these observations I have not found it possible to adopt without restriction. See also (p. 536, et seqq.) what he says respecting the influence of the mysteries on some ceremonies and expressions adopted by Christianity.

## SECTION V.



(1.) THROUGH a singular reaction, the Grecian theology, sprung from Eastern ideas, ended by being the type to which the Greeks willingly traced all foreign notions. Thus, they who had received Bacchus from Egypt, gave, in turn, the name of Bacchus to all the divinities with which he had any analogy. From the same principle resulted a multiplicity of Jupiters, Mercuries, Venuses, &c. The Greeks even went so far as to discover in foreign theogonies, those divinities which belonged exclusively to Greece, such as Hercules, &c.

(2.) Eusebius has preserved, in the second book of his *Præparatio Evangelica*, a fragment of the sixth book of Diodorus, in which an account is given of the opinions of Euhemerus, and of his journey in the fabulous island of *Panchaïa*. Against the absurdities of this story, Plutarch has protested. Speaking of the Egyptian gods, he declares himself afraid to discuss certain particulars; "for this," says he, "would throw open the great folding-doors to an atheistical

multitude, who separate divine from human affairs ; and would sanction the impostures of Euhemerus, the Messenian. This man, having himself composed a work replete with incredible fables, diffused every sort of impiety throughout the world, abolishing all those who have been esteemed gods, and transforming them into the names of ancient generals, admirals, and kings, as written in golden letters at Panchæa, or Panchon, which no man, whether Greek or Barbarian, ever happened to see, except Euhemerus himself; having sailed to the country of the Panchonians and Triphylians, people not existing in any part of this earth." (Plut. *de Isid. et Osir.* § 23.)

(3.) An eloquent passage of Maximus Tyrius, closed by a magnificent peroration, developes, on this point, the doctrine of the Platonists (*Dissert.* VIII. particularly § 3) ; but the adoption of this principle does not by any means prove that the gods have been men. The idea of lending the form of man to the Divinity is certainly one of the first assimilations of the human mind, and the most natural error. The ancient universe was full of *anthropomorphism*.

(4.) We know, from the evidence of Herodotus, that the Egyptians did not render divine honours to heroes. (Lib. ii. cap. 50.) The class of demi-gods is originally Grecian.

(5.) It would be very wrong to seek, in the metaphysical ideas of Homer, a strict concatenation ; and

those are to be pitied who only read his immortal master-pieces with the prejudices of men of letters. All systems respecting Homer are false: he has, in turn, been regarded as an historian, a theologian, an alchymist, a geographer, a moralist—and Homer is a *poet*! This point of criticism is applicable to the manner in which we view the whole of antiquity. It cannot be too frequently repeated, that, in the present state of human knowledge, the only system which we should follow, in history, in philology, in mythology, and in criticism, is not to adopt any system. We do not thence undertake to affirm, that a logical order and rational process should be neglected:—we only wish to say, that, far from submitting to any of the theories which have hitherto prevailed, we should, in order to seize upon the true genius of ancient times, present ourselves, divested of all prejudices, in the immense arena of antiquity, and study science in every ramification; not in its chimerical relation with our own ideas, but as placing ourselves (if the expression may be allowed) in the centre of each of those vast circumferences, which few men can, in truth, wholly pervade, but of which every person can, at least, appreciate the extent.

- (6.) Κρήτες αἰὲν ψεῦσται καὶ γὰρ τάφον, ὦ ἄνα, σείῃ  
 Κρήτες ἐτεκτῆναντο σὺ δ' οὐ θάνεις, ἔσσι γὰρ αἰεὶ.

Callim. in Jov. 8.

- (7.) It is not improbable that some detached doc-

trines on this subject may have been current before Euhemerus. We only mean to say, that he was the first who fashioned them into a system. Euhemerus, as we learn from Diodorus, was contemporary with Cassander, king of Macedon.



## SECTION VI.



(1.) THE *Memorial* of Lucius Ampelius, first published by Saumaise, and afterwards by Grævius, at the end of Florus (Amst. 1702), enumerates *five* Bacchuses. The *first* is the son of Jupiter and Proserpine; an agriculturist, and inventor of wine: Ceres is *his sister*. The *second* Bacchus is son of Meros and Flora: he gave his name to the river Granicus. The *third* is son of Cabirus, who reigned in Asia. The *fourth* is son of Saturn and Semele. The *fifth* is son of Nisus and Hesione. (*Ed. Græv. cap. 8.*) The incoherencies accumulated together in this nomenclature, may give us some idea of the chaos of mythological traditions respecting Bacchus. In mentioning the great importance of Nonnus on this subject, we hasten to announce, that his *Dionysiacs*, of which the text has hitherto been so much disfigured (and which has not been reprinted during two centuries), are on the eve of publication, with comments, by Professor Gräfe, already well known from the success of his

*Meleager*. (Lips. 1811.) The first volume of the *Dionysiaks* is in the press at Leipsick.

(2.) The second Bacchus, it is true, had not any direct relation with Ceres; and yet we may affirm, that he was educated by Rhea, Cybele, who is so perfectly confounded with Γαῖα, Δηῶ, Γημήτης, Δημήτηρ, and, finally, Ceres. (Diod. l. i. § 1. c. 7.) Ἡ Ἀχαιῶ, καὶ Ωπίς, καὶ Ἑλλή Γῆρυς, καὶ Γῆ, καὶ Δημήτηρ, ἡ αὐτή· (Hesychius, in the word Ἀχαιῶ.) In general, the *myth* of Cybele was so united with that of Rhea, and the *myth* of the Earth with that of Demeter, that it is not possible to determine the shades of distinction. That the poets have differed extremely on this subject, appears from Æschylus, when he mentions Earth,

“ Whose names are many, but her form the same.”

Γαῖα, πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφὴ μία.

PROB. 210.

It seems that, in all this, we should distinguish that which belongs to the different epochs of Grecian mythology. Γαῖα *Gaïa*, which the Romans called *Tellus*, is among the divinities of the first dynasty; those Titanian divinities which preceded the circle of the *Magni Dii*: a circle, it must be owned, very vaguely defined, from Homer to the latest mythographers. Demeter appears only as the successor of Γαῖα in the mythological cycle. It may be further conjectured, that, while symbols of the same idea, Γαῖα and Demeter had this distinction between them:—that Γαῖα

rather designated the entire, the totality, the depths of this terrestrial globe; Demeter, its surface, the soil fit for agriculture, the fruits and productions which enrich or ornament it. In support of this observation, it may be remarked, that the *primitive* or *Titanian* divinities possessed, in comparison with the succeeding dynasty, something very colossal in their proportions. This is proved by the *Prometheus* of Æschylus. However it may be, we should not here expect, as in the generality of theogonies, an historical, strict, and exact deduction. See some excellent observations on this subject, in Creuzer's *Symbolik*, tom. iv. p. 331, et seqq.

(3.) Pindar (Isthm. vii. 3) calls Bacchus χαλκοκρότου πάρεδρον Δαμάτερος — *aristrepæ assessorem Cereris*. A passage from Sophocles is no less remarkable :

Πολυώνυμε, Καδμείας  
 Νύμφας ἀγαλμα, καὶ Διὸς  
 βαρυερεμέτα γένος,  
 Κλυτὰν ὃς ἀμφέπεις  
 Ἰταλίαν, μέδεις δὲ παγ-  
 κοίνου Ἐλευσινίας  
 Διοῦς ἐν κόλποις,

ὦ Βακχεῦ, κ. τ. λ.

ANTIG. v. 1115—1121.

“O thou with many names, ornament of the daughter of Cadmus, offspring of the thundering Jupiter; thou who presidest over powerful Italy, who reignest in the bosom of the Eleusinian Ceres; O Bacchus, &c.”

These authorities are the more important, as being, of this kind, perhaps the most ancient that can be quoted in favour of the alliance between Ceres and Bacchus; yet no person has before noticed them. The Scholiast of Pindar says, that Bacchus, placed near Ceres, was, according to some, Zagreus; according to others, Jacchus. Among several well-known marbles, we shall here remark an inscription, given by Gruter (p. 309), which exhibits, with other words, DEO. IACCHO. CERERI. ET. CORÆ. A medal of Antinös, struck by the inhabitants of Adramyttium, in Mysia, joins to his name the title of ΙΑΚΧΟΣ, alluding to his character as *paredros*, or assessor of the Egyptian gods. When Hadrian wished to immortalise his favourite, he bestowed on him the title of *Assessor of the gods honoured in Egypt*, as appears from the celebrated inscription, published also by Gruter, Ἀντινόω, συνθροῖνον τῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ θεῶν, κ. τ. λ. The title of *paredros* given to Antinous, procured for him that of Iacchus from the people of Adramyttium, a colony of Athens. (See Eckhel, *Doctr. num. vet.* t. vi. p. 528 — Rasche, *Lexicon Numism.* tom. i. p. 738.) An epigram, in the *Anthologia*, exhibits Iacchus compared to an infant of ten months, suckled by his mother. (Brunck. *Anal.* tom. iii. p. 292 — and Jacobs, *Animadv. in Anthol.* tom. iii. part ii. p. 237; and part iii. p. 139.)

(4.) The more profoundly we study the ancient religions, the more we may congratulate ourselves on

living at an epoch when the human mind soars above this labyrinth of popular modes of worship, without morality, and without dignity. It is, perhaps, the only point in which we enjoy any advantage over the ancients: but this advantage is immense. The double doctrine of the ancients condemned the world to an eternal servitude. Whilst a few men, enlightened by the most sublime knowledge, penetrated into the highest regions of thought; the multitude languished in a deplorable state of blindness, amidst shameful superstitions, which were carefully cherished, and decorated with all the deceptions of imagination. Every thinking man should esteem himself fortunate in having been born under the influence of a religion purely intellectual, equally accessible to the peasant as to Newton, and of which the character is as divine as its origin. We feel, in giving ourselves up to these considerations, that sort of satisfaction and honourable pride which an Englishman ought to feel when he compares the constitution of his country to the despotic governments of the East, which have this point in common with the false religions, that they degrade man whilst they corrupt him.

We find, in one of those religious chants which the ancient Liturgy of the Greek church has preserved, some passages, sufficiently eloquent, respecting the double doctrine, as placed in opposition with the universal instruction of Christianity.—“Ye, Apo-

stles of Christ, however homely in speech, have shown yourselves profound in wisdom ; for ye have resolved the intricate reasonings of philosophers, the subtilties of rhetoricians, and the calculations of astronomers. It is, therefore, evident that none but yourselves are instructors of the world.” This apostrophe is followed by a very curious passage : “ Peter speaks, and Plato is mute ; Paul teaches, Pythagoras disappears. Finally, these lowly apostles, speaking from God, commit to the tomb the dead eloquence of Greece, and awake the universe to the service of Christ.”—Οἱ λόγῳ ἰδιῶται, σοφοὶ τῇ γνώσει ὥφθητε, πλοκαὶς τῶν λόγων τῶν φιλοσόφων λύσαντες, ῥητόρων τὰς διαπλοκαὶς, καὶ ψήφους ἀστρονόμων. διδ' Ἀπόστολοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ μόνοι πάσης οἰκουμένης ἀνεδείχθητε διδάσκαλοι——Ὁ Πέτρος ῥητορεύει, καὶ Πλάτων κατασίγησε. διδάσκει Παῦλος, Πυθαγόρας ἔδυε. λοιπὸν, τῶν Ἀποστόλων θεολόγων ὁ δῆμος τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων νεκρὰν φθογγὴν καταθάπτει, καὶ τὸν κόσμον συνεγείρει πρὸς λατρείαν Χριστοῦ. (Vetus Officium Quadragesimale, ed. Card. Quirini, Venet. 1729, part i. p. 256.)

## EXPLANATION OF THE ENGRAVINGS.



*THE gem (a fine root of emerald), which ornaments the frontispiece, is taken from the Imperial collection of the Hermitage. It represents Triptolemus on the car of Ceres, and has not before been published. A detailed account of it will be found in the learned work which the counsellor of state, M. Koehler, is now preparing, and which will lay before us all the treasures of the Imperial cabinet.*

*The conformity of this gem with the painting which has furnished a subject for the second engraving (see page 1), deserves the notice of antiquaries. This device is borrowed from M. Millin's valuable work on *Ancient Vases* (tom. ii. pl. xxxi), and represents Triptolemus, Ceres, Hecate, and Rhea or Cybele. The upper part is omitted. M. Viscontis's explanation of this picture may be seen in M. Millin's work. It is derived from the *Hymn to Ceres*, a composition attributed to Homer.*

*At the end of the Sixth Section is represented Ceres, sitting on a stone, which exhibits on one side the Indian Triad, composed of Brahma, Vishnù, and Siva or Mahadeva, as it appears among the ruins of the famous temple in Elephanta, near Bombay, described by Niebuhr. (Voyage en Arabie, Amst. 1780, tom. ii. p. 25.) The other side exhibits the head of Isis, as found on an ancient Egyptian brick, of which Count Caylus has given the figure in his Recueil d'Antiquités (tom. iv. pl. xv. no. 4).*





OBSERVATIONS

OCCASIONED BY

MR. OUVAROFF'S

ESSAY

ON THE

Eleusinian Mysteries.

*(Communicated to the Translator by Mr. Christie.)*



# OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

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THE Author of the foregoing Essay has contented himself with marking on his canvass the general outlines of a very learned design, intending perhaps at his future leisure, or leaving it for other colourists, to supply the smaller accessories, that may complete his view of the Eleusinian mysteries. The observations here subjoined may serve as further materials, or as suggestions for an alteration in the drawing of parts of his performance. They are offered, by no means, in confidence of their being free from error, with the highest esteem for Mr. Ouvaroff's learning, his philosophy, and the firm conviction he displays of the most important fundamental truths.

*Of the Antiquity of the Mysteries.*

A difficulty will perhaps have occurred to the reader at the outset of this work, from Mr. Ouvaroff having too indiscriminately treated the foundation and the growth of the mysteries. His meaning may be collected to be this: that the developement of the mysteries at Eleusis was progressive, and that they arrived at their full celebrity not earlier than the time of Homer, or that of the establishment of the Greek republics. But Mr. Ouvaroff has evinced too ready a compliance with the notions of Meiners and Dupuis; and he has involved the origin of the mysteries in unnecessary doubt. The names of several founders being quoted in the preceding pages, upon the authority of ancient writers, it could neither be requisite to throw the question open into "the vast deserts of uncertain times" with Dupuis, nor to reduce it to so low an epoch as the rise of the Greek republics. Very few of the festivals of Greece were known to its first inhabitants. They were introduced from

the East by some of the very founders there cited. On this principle, Melampus seems to have a peculiar claim. It may be difficult to state the very year, but the age of their institution need not be overclouded with uncertainty.

Mr. Ouvaroff remarks, that neither are the mysteries noticed, nor can mystic ideas be traced in Homer; a difficulty which the historian of them may never surmount. He would hence infer, that the foundation of them was of later date. But the deities selected by Homer for the machinery of his poems, were wholly independent of the mysteries, and took their rise from a very different, perhaps a later source. I would seek the origin of the Eleusian shews in earlier times, and deduce the imagery adopted by Homer, from causes connected with the improvement of these shews by foreign settlers in Greece. The mysteries of Eleusis were in fact of Pelasgic origin, in as much as they were derived from those in Samothrace which the Pelasgi founded; and although I apprehend that imagery was by no means excluded from the latter, yet could they have furnished no suitable materials for the

Iliad. The personifications of Grecian polytheism were subsequent to the practice of Pelasgic rites in Thrace, and may have followed very soon after the introduction of them at Eleusis. The rites of the Pelasgi were almost peculiar to themselves. Had the Cabiric worship been known in Phœnicia, says a learned English antiquary,\* Cadmus needed not to have gone so far as Greece or Thrace to be initiated. But Cadmus having learned this in Samothrace, established it in Bœotia†; and after the introduction of these mysteries into Attica, we may conclude that various Egyptian strangers contributed greatly to their attraction, by employing in them the symbolical paintings of Egypt which they brought with them. The simple objects of the Pelasgic worship were hence embodied; a taste for personifying became general. Poetry was enriched by it, and painting and sculpture were rapidly improved. When Homer afterwards selected a superior order of personages,

\* Wise, history and chronology of the fabulous ages, p. 42.

† Upon the foundation of Thebes by him, 1494, A. C.

(ready fashioned to his hand, and not devised by him), to increase the interest of his poems, forgetting the abstract properties which they had originally represented, he described them to the life, and engaged them in natural action. The poet of nature would have little taste for primitive traditions or metaphysical doctrine, when other more promising materials were at hand. Hence the earlier establishment of the mysteries, and Homer's silence respecting them, are perfectly consistent; nor does it seem necessarily to follow, that the theology of Homer was anterior to all metaphysical combinations.

It is in the Eleventh Book of the *Odyssey*, if in any part of Homer's poems, that mystic allusions might have been expected; but none such appear. We have there a display of poetical necromancy, but not the smallest reference to the Eleusinian shows. The punishments in Tartarus are very briefly noticed at the end, and a great part of the book consists of an evocation of the Manes ingeniously and feelingly introduced, to acquaint the reader with the concluding events in the lives of several



great leaders, for whom an interest had been excited in the Iliad. In one instance Homer has been thought to have mysticised. The northern and southern entrances to the cavern of the Nymphs, in the Thirteenth Book of the Odyssey, ver. 109, 110, 112, resemble much a certain Rabbinical conceit, that very possibly originated among the Mystagogues at Babylon, from whom the Jews might have collected it after the first captivity; and Homer might have heard of it long before. But we may rather believe the coincidence to have been purely accidental\*.

The authorities adduced by Meursius and Bishop Warburton, leave very little doubt that the mysteries of Eleusis were founded in the reign of Erectheus†, to whom the Athenians, by a courtly compliment, ascribed them. But other more probable inventors have been named. Theodoret indeed places the introduction of them one hundred years later, when

\* This is explained at length in Windet's tract.—*De vitâ functorum statu, ex Hebræorum et Græcorum comparatis sententiis*, p. 96. et seq.

† He reigned fifty years, from 1398, A.C.

he affirms that they were brought to Eleusis by Orpheus, who afterwards improved them on his return from Egypt. Orpheus is styled by Theodoret a native of Odrysa, a country near mount Rhodope; but for the share he had in the improvement of them, it is quite enough to know that Orpheus was a northern with regard to Attica. According to Androtion, cited by the scholiast upon Sophocles, Eumolpus, the fifth in descent from a Thracian of the same name, imparted them; and this is more fully recorded by Acesodorus in the following statement. The aboriginal inhabitants of Eleusis waging war against Erectheus, called in Thracian auxiliaries, among whom was Eumolpus, the fifth of his line, and he it was who founded the mysteries. Thus the improvement of them may be referred to Egypt, but they were of Thracian origin.

Of the celebration of mysteries in Thrace, several notices appear. Samothrace\*, Imbros†, and Lemnos, were Thracian islands,

\* Θρηϊκὴν τε Σάμος Κορυθαίτιον ἄστυ. Dionys. Perieg.

† Ἡδὲ Ἰμβρος, Θρακικὴ μὲν ἐστὶ νῆσος, ἐξ ἧς Κατεΐρων καὶ αὐτὴ. Eustath. in Dionys.

famous for Cabiric and Corybantian rites; and these again were imparted to them by the Pelasgi \*. The Pelasgi and the Thracians may have been the same people; at least we discover, that these mysterious doctrines and rites were not first derived from Egypt, but were established in Greece, by a people who came north about, and brought with them their opinions and ceremonies from the centre of Asia. I mean not, from these deductions, to establish the antiquity of one particular race of people, in preference to another; but I would correct any unfair prejudice that may be entertained in favour of Egypt. Both nations received their learning from one central point, and at the same early period. I would merely shew, on these authorities, that the Pelasgi were the first to communicate what they knew to the Aborigines of Greece.

We may now therefore endeavour to meet a complaint of Mr. Ouvaroff, in an early part of his Essay, that the analogy which subsisted

\* Ὅστις δὲ τὰ Καβείρων ὄργια μεμύηται, τὰ Σαμοθηήικες ἐπιτελέουσι λαβόντες παρὰ Πελασγῶν. κ. τ. λ. Herodot.

See Meursii Græc. Feriat. v. Καβείρια.

between the mysteries in Samothrace and those at Eleusis has never yet been satisfactorily determined. This analogy will best appear from considering the agents in both of them. The priests at Eleusis were four in number: the Hierophant, the Torch-bearer, the Assistant at the Altar, and the Sacred Herald. They severally bore the symbols of the Demiurgus, the Sun, Moon, and Mercury. It is probable, that at first they were actors in a drama. In later times they contented themselves with shewing and explaining the machinery within the temple\*.

The Cabiric priests in Samothrace were four. The scholiast upon Apollonius Rhodius has named them Axieros, Axiocersos, Axio-cersa, and Casmilus. The scholiast also terms them Ceres, Proserpine, Hades, and Mercury; doubtless he meant to mark their correspondence with these deities at Eleusis. For the Pelasgian founders of the mysteries in Samothrace had no names for the gods, ac-

\* Ἱεροφάντης, ὁ μυσταγωγός, Ἱερεὺς, ὁ τὰ μυστήρια δεικνύων. Hesych.—“The Hierophant is the mystagogue, or priest, who sheweth the mysteries.”

cording to Herodotus, who expressed himself as a polytheist; and where no distinction of names obtained, the unity of the Deity was perhaps acknowledged. These Samothracian cabirs therefore, (as the word *cabir* implies,) were rather powers or attributes than deities. With these may also be mentioned the Idæi Dactyli of the Phrygians, who are said to have received their mysteries from Samothrace about the time of Dardanus. Among these was a personage named Celmis, who, it may be believed, was no other than Casmilus or Camillus. Acmon and Damnameneus were also of their number, if the latter be not two appellations blended together, for Maneus and Acmon were both names of Titanian kings. Thus however it would appear, that Celmis, Camillus, Mercury, and the Sacred Herald, (and I will add Iacchus,) were relative characters.

From the want of better means of illustrating a subject on which ancient writers have observed so profound a silence, the accompanying engraving from a Sicilian painted Vase\* is

\* This Vase, (of which I have likewise elsewhere attempted an explanation), may not have been of much earlier

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offered; as it exhibits something like the four priests or agents in the Samothracian and Eleusinian shows. In this the Hierophant appears as a workman at his forge, in which capacity he properly personates the Demiurgus \*, bearing a sledge hammer; in the same way as the Cabiric Vulcan is represented on some ancient coins. Thus the character of the Idæan Acmon may be determined, for his name

antiquity than the beginning of the Christian æra. Nor may it have represented either the mysteries of Samothrace or Eleusis. But we know that mysteries were celebrated in many other parts of Greece, in imitation of the latter, and that they were accompanied with similar rites. My reason for supposing it related to these rites, results from my persuasion, that the paintings of the black and red Greek Vases were copied from transparent scenes in different mysteries. Since the late proprietor of this Vase permitted me to have this engraving made from it, the vessel has been by an accident destroyed.

\* This representation differs much from the habit of the Demiurgus in the Egyptian mysteries, as noticed by Mr. Ouvaroff. At Eleusis too, the Hierophant, and the Sacred Herald, were only designated by their garment, hair, and fillet. But this must have been after they had ceased to personate characters in these dramas.

implies an anvil\*. The second personage in this engraving is a female assistant, not indeed at the altar, but at the furnace of Hephæstus. The third in the attitude of a person proclaiming or commanding, may represent Camillus, or the Sacred Herald. The fourth is the *Δαδούχος* with his Torch across his knee. These two last figures occur in more than one plate of D'Hancarville's Etruscan Vases, where their action is further shewn.

These four figures seem designed for the elementary principles alluded to by Varro. Hephæstus, fire; Isis, water; Mercury, air; and Pan, matter; the vital part of which last, the Sun, is denoted by his Torch, and we have already noticed that the *Δαδούχος*, or Torch-bearer, carried a symbol of the Sun. The torch is about to be ignited at the command of Hermest†, the spiritual agent in the workshop of Creation. I apprehend it to be consistent

\* *Ἄλκυων*—an Anvil, Heaven.—Hesych.

† Hermes as a personification of Wind or Spirit, was considered by the Pagans as the winged messenger of heaven. He was originally the same as the Orphic *ἔρως*, and the winged Iacchus became his substitute at Eleusis.

with the principles of the mysteries, that the primary Great Cause should not appear. His representatives the Elements are produced, and have elsewhere attempted to shew\*, that these were selected as fit symbols of the essence and the attributes of the Deity; and that they denoted his presence, his commands, his judgments, his mercies, and his promises, of all which the ancient world were not without some indistinct knowledge, preserved to them from patriarchal traditions.

But these primary powers or Cabirs, were not always proper to Pelasgia alone. In after times, in the Erectheum in the Acropolis at Athens, were four altars, erected to Jupiter, Poseidon Erectheus, Butas, and Hephæstus; where, though the order be transposed, yet the Demiurgic Hephæstus again appears, and a stranger, (*Βούρας*) Butas. In Egypt were also four primary Deities, Osiris, Isis, and Typhon; denoting the creating, preserving, and destroying powers of the Deity, and a fourth

\* Essay on that earliest species of idolatry, the worship of the Elements, 1814.



named Horus, who agreed with Iacchus at least, in being represented of tender age. In India we find Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, as primary powers, figuring the creator, preserver, and destroyer, by the symbols earth, water, and fire; and a fourth, who now appears discarded from the mystic college, and has long been worshipped apart—the deity Boud, who has occasioned Asiatick antiquaries much painful enquiry. This last I consider to be a personification of spirit; and if the four be classed together, they present a very singular analogy to the deities and the hero revered in the Erectheum at Athens, and to the four agents in the Samothracian and Eleusinian mysteries.

If all these nations had severally their Cabirs, their instructors in useful truths, we may believe that each acquired them by separate inheritance. We need not wonder that the Pelasgic founders of the sacred rites in Samothrace enjoyed their portion even more pure than the early Egyptian mystics, who, with a further supply of traditions, imported many obscene rites, of which the Pelasgi may be supposed to

have been ignorant\*. Whether these Pelasgi were Scythians or a Celtic race, has been

\* What is here asserted, respecting the purer rites of the Pelasgi, is apparently contrary to the report of Herodotus, and requires explanation. The setting up of unhewn stones in Greece for religious memorials was a Pelasgic custom; but, as these were rough and unsculptured, the obscene additions to them must have been erroneously ascribed to the Pelasgi by Herodotus. Pausanias assures us, that the forming these stones into representations of Hermes, the lower parts being quadrangular, was an original device of the Athenians, *Att.* p. 56, and *Messen.* p. 361, *Ed. Kuhnii.* The additions above alluded to, were necessarily subsequent to the introduction of sculpture, and of indecent processions by the Egyptian Melampus. If, as the same historian observes, the Initiators in Samothrace, in his time, explained to their *Epoptæ* the meaning of the Phallic Termini, then common in Greece, yet how many additions might not the Cabiric mysteries have experienced between the times when Cadmus and Herodotus were initiated? Diodorus Siculus furnishes a credible tradition respecting the first use of Termini in Samothrace. It is this\*. “At the time of the

\* Τοὺς δὲ περιλειφθέντας, προσαναδραμεῖν εἰς τοὺς ὑψηλοτέρους τῆς νήσου τόπους. τῆς δὲ θαλάσσης ἀναβαινούσης αἰὲ μᾶλλον, εὖξασθαι τοῖς Θεοῖς τοὺς ἰγχωσίους, καὶ διασωθέντας κύκλῳ περὶ ὕλην τὴν νῆσον ὅρους δέσθαι τῆς σωτηρίας, καὶ βωμοὺς ἱδρῆσασθαι, ἐφ’ ᾧν μέχρι τοῦ νῦν θύειν. Vol. i. lib. 5. p. 369. Ed. Wesseling.

matter of dispute. Some of their institutions in Greece seem to have been derived from Colchis on the Euxine. But Wise has traced the Cabirs through the north of Asia Minor, to Bactria. Strabo gave credit to an asser-

deluge, occasioned by the waters forcing their way from the Euxine through the Cyanean rocks and the Hellespont, the low grounds of Samothrace were inundated, by which many persons were destroyed. Those of the natives who survived betook themselves in haste to the higher places of the island. But the sea ever gaining upon them, they prayed to the gods, and being saved by them, they set up stones in a circle (or round) about the island, to mark the limits within which they they had found safety, and built altars, on which they even now sacrifice." Whoever may be curious in Celtic antiquities, and be disposed to attach importance to the report of Strabo from Artemidorus, alluded to above, may consider, whether the Druidical circles of stones in our island may not have been devised to imitate this act of commemoration by the Pelasgi. The Samothracian deluge was, perhaps, nothing more than a local tradition of a much more general and important catastrophe. But the setting up of boundary stones may be still more reasonably referred to the first establishment of the sons of Noah, soon after the deluge (those at least who partook not in the faction at Babel), when the Almighty set out the bounds of their habitations.

tion of Artemidorus, that similar mysteries to those of Samothrace were celebrated in an island near Britain, which has been supposed to be Anglesea.

These circumstances give some colour to a supposition, that they might have been a Gomerian race. The very name of *Gomer*\* implies *profoundly learned*; and his learning, we may be very sure, consisted in a knowledge of the pure Patriarchal worship, and of the traditions and expectations of the Noachidæ.

Before I dismiss the subject of the antiquity of the mysteries, Mr. Ouvaroff's reference to our Indian antiquaries must not be overlooked. Like many others, Mr. Ouvaroff has been dazzled by the discovery of Mr. Wilford, that certain Sanscrit words were used in the mysteries. The admission however of foreign terms does not necessarily imply the adoption of foreign rites; and, from a note in Davies's edition of the Tusculan Disputations of Cicero (lib. i. p. 53) it appears, that a superstitious respect was anciently paid to words adopted

\* גמיר Chald. consommé, très-sçavant.—Houbigant.

from foreign languages, by which probably the Oriental are implied. Hence these lines of the pseudo-Zoroaster, quoted by the learned critick—

“ Ὀνόματα βάρβαρα μὴ πότε ἀλλάξης  
 Ἔστι γὰρ ὀνόματα παρ’ ἐκάστοις θεόσδοτα,  
 Δύναμιν ἐν τελεταῖς ἄρρητον ἔχοντα.”

“ Change not foreign names, for every foreign nation has some peculiar to it, imparted by the Deity, and these are of unspeakable efficacy in Initiatory rites.”

Hence the words *Konx—om—pax* might have been introduced into the mysteries from their being supposed to possess some secret virtue, even though the Initiators had not a precise knowledge of their meaning.—It is far from improbable, that these words may hereafter be found to be of Sclavonian original, since that language is said to be very closely allied to the Sanscrit.

*Whether the Dii majorum Gentium were deified  
Men.*

An opinion of Mr. Ouvaroff's illustrious predecessor in these enquiries, Bishop Warburton, on a doctrine supposed to have been enforced in the mysteries, forms the subject of Section V. in the foregoing Essay. But before I proceed to consider this point, I must beg leave to differ from Mr. Ouvaroff on another. He observes, that the supposition of the Heathen gods having been merely deified mortals, chiefly rests on the meaning that may be attached to a word in Herodotus, who stated that the Persians neither allowed the erecting statues, temples, nor altars, as it appeared to him, because they did not (as the Greeks) believe the gods to be ἀνθρωποφυέας, of human origin. Mr. Ouvaroff rejects this sense of the word ἀνθρωποφυέας, and adopts our countryman Stanley's interpretation *humanâ formâ præditos*. But the true meaning of the word is, *partaking of human natures*, which evidences the absur-

dity alleged by the Persians, as including the notion of form represented by statues, and of dwelling in temples made with hands: and this sense of the word is maintained by Bishop Warburton in an excellent note in his *Div. Leg.* vol. i. p. 150-1.

That *all* the *Dii majorum Gentium* were declared in the mysteries to have been deified mortals, can scarcely be credited. What has been adduced to this effect from Cicero by Warburton (two particular passages excepted) from the declaration of Scævola, as reported by Augustine, and from Plutarch, relate only to heroes, such as Hercules, Bacchus, Æsculapius, Castor and Pollux, or to Dæmons. The authorities that really countenance the opinion are these: a passage from Cicero *de Naturâ Deorum*, another from the *Tusculan Disputations*, and a third from Augustine. This last, however, is not so important. It is the story of Alexander's communicating to his mother by letter the information he had collected from an Egyptian Hierophant, that the *Dii majorum Gentium* had also been only men: but, allowing

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this story to be true, it may have been no more than a very keen satire ; and if we accept it in too literal a sense, the fine point of it is lost.

If the great gods of Egypt were merely parts of the universe, (and there may be reason to suspect they were so considered,) the Egyptian Hierophant might have withheld this information from Alexander; he would not scruple however to own that the heroes had been deified men. But when he proceeded a step further, to acquaint him that all the great gods (of the chief of whom Olympias had persuaded her son he was the offspring) were originally mere mortals, this was a home stroke artfully levelled at the great conqueror's pride ; and it was only upon Alexander's proposing to report this to his mother, that the priest betrayed alarm, expecting to feel the weight of his displeasure.

There remain, then, to be considered the two passages of Cicero. In one of these, in the Tusculan Disputations, lib. i. c. 13. (p. 26, ed. Davisii)—“ What,” says he, “ is not almost all heaven, not to carry on this detail further, filled with the human race? But if I should search and examine antiquity, and bring for-



ward from it those things which the Grecian writers have delivered, it would be found that even those very gods themselves who are deemed the *Dii majorum Gentium*, had their original here below, and ascended from hence into heaven. Enquire to whom those sepulchres belong, which are so commonly shewn in Greece,—remember, for you are initiated, what you have been taught in the mysteries; you will at length understand, how far this matter can be carried \*.”

In this, which is the strongest authority, the Grecian writers and local traditions are adduced, both of which favor the opinion that the greater gods were deified mortals. But this opinion we shall find corrected in his *Treatise de Naturâ Deorum*, and there stigmatised by him as highly irreligious. But the matter, he adds, may be carried still further, for you know what doctrines are revealed in the mysteries. He does not proceed to declare what was precisely taught in them, but we may con-

\* This is nearly Bishop Warburton's translation of the passage, vol. i. Div. Leg. p. 213.

clude they went still further than the Grecian writers and local traditions; and it must be remembered that the argument here respects not the nature of the gods, but the immortality of the soul, which the person whom Cicero addresses professed to disbelieve.

Indeed it is most surprising (if it were not from an oversight,) that Cicero should thus accost his auditor—" *Reminiscere, quoniam es Initiatus, quæ traduntur Mysteriis*"—when the latter denied a point of doctrine, which of all others we may be sure was taught in the mysteries. To such a disputant Cicero, no doubt, preferred adopting the most popular arguments, and the system of Euhemerus, with regard even to the greater gods, answered very well this end. But he treats the matter much more seriously in his *Tract de Nat. Deor.* l. i. c. 42. There he complains, that those who would assert that religion had been invented for political purposes, subverted it from its very foundation: that Prodicus the Cean, who deified things beneficial to man, had left not a vestige of religion. Were not those devoid of it, he adds, who deified the dead? As Euhe-

merus; for Euhemerus proved their deaths and burials. Did he establish religion by this, or did he not rather annul it altogether? He forbears to speak of Eleusis. He passes by Samothrace (where perhaps a different account of these things was given), and the mysteries of Lemnos, in which mysteries, when explained, and brought back to their true meaning, it is found that not so much the nature of the gods is taught in them, as the nature of things, where the words "*quibus explicatis*" are immediately connected with "*eaque quæ Lemni*". From this supposition then of Bishop Warburton, the mysteries of Lemnos undoubtedly, and probably both those of Samothrace and Eleusis, stand clear.

We may believe therefore with Cicero in the passage last adduced, and with the learned Varro, that the great gods, when explained, were no more than the elements or parts of the universe. Even these authorities then, how-

\* As I apprehend, they were rightly interpreted by the Abbé Pluches, although his translation was not approved by Bishop Warburton.

ever apparently or partially favorable to Bishop Warburton's supposition, may not be sufficiently conclusive; and the opinion of Mr. Ouvaroff may be well founded, that the doctrine of the Apotheosis, as referring to the greater gods, was not set forth in the mysteries, although he seems not to have rested his opinion to that effect on the strongest arguments that might have been selected.

*On the Doctrine of the Mysteries.*

Bishop Warburton has concluded, that the Unity of the Godhead and the doctrine of a Providence were taught in the mysteries. If polytheism was explained away, I would fain believe, that the first great truth was taught in lieu of it. But *that* providence which consists in God's holy, wise, and powerful support and management of his creatures, is not implied in any quotation that I remember to be adduced by Warburton, much less in the scheme set forth, and supported by many authorities, in

the dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic mysteries of Mr. Taylor, with which Mr. Ouvaroff is apparently unacquainted. The Essay of Mr. Taylor is curious, as it shews how firmly a belief in the consequences of the Fall, the deterioration of man's nature, was impressed on the minds of the contemplative part of the ancient world, and what wild speculations resulted from engrafting on this belief, the notion of a Metempsychosis. But whether we must term this scheme comparatively late, and not less than 790 years after the foundation of the mysteries at Eleusis by Eumolpus, since the doctrine of the Metempsychosis is said to have been unknown in Greece before the time of Pherecydes (who was the master of Pythagoras) about 560 years A. C.; or whether the Metempsychosis was that particular secret, which Orpheus brought from Egypt, when the mysteries were improved by him, I leave for others to determine. It is fair however to state, that even this view of the mysteries had been in part anticipated by Warburton; but, like many other valuable, and well authenti-

cated points, it was thrown by him into shadow, that his legislative system might appear more prominent. He had noticed from Plato, that the end and design of initiation was, to restore the soul to that state from whence it fell, as from its native seat of perfection. Vol. I. p. 195. This is completely in unison with the suggestions of Mr. Ouvaroff, so very philosophically and beautifully expressed in his Third Section, where he apprehends that man's relation to the Deity, the original dignity of his nature, his fall, and the (*supposed*) mean of his return to God, preserved from ancient traditions, composed the doctrines of the ἀπόρρητα.

By Mr. Ouvaroff's method of resolving polytheism into its first principles, many fables in the popular religion of Greece will derive a satisfactory elucidation. The descent of Proserpine, who, instead of gathering fruit in Eden, was hurried to the *Inferi* when culling flowers in Enna; the wanderings of Ceres, and the partial recovery of her daughter, probably effected at Eleusis through the spiritual Iacchus, the parallel story of Eurydice wounded in the

ankle \* by a serpent, (applying still more closely to the fate of our first parent,) and her restoration by Orpheus, a reputed founder of the mysteries, and the relapse of nature thus imperfectly restored, with other fables that might be cited, all become intelligible from Mr. Ouvaroff's hypothesis.

2101. *On the Eleusinian Iacchus.*

In the last section of his Essay, the author agitates a question, to which he may be thought to have attached unnecessary importance; whether the rites of Bacchus and Ceres were not ultimately blended, and which Bacchus, of the many celebrated by poets, was the Iacchus of the Eleusinian mysteries. No doubt, the mysteries of Eleusis were enlarged and improved by the addition of every species of foreign fable, that could give variety and interest to the shows, and many strange personages, real or fictitious, would in time be ad-

\* "Occidit, in talum serpentis dente recepto."

Ovid. Metam. l. 10. v. 10.

mitted. Such may have been Iacchus, of whose origin so little is known. Of the three deities named Bacchus, Mr. Ouvaroff observes, the first is oriental or Egyptian, the second a pure Hellenist; but he is altogether at a loss to account for the third. He adds, that a considerable part of ancient mythology rests upon unknown portions of history. It represents isolated facts that are lost in the night of time. But if antiquaries will resort to Egypt for the primary ideas of Greek mythology, let the following be taken as a specimen of the histories they bring away with them; nor must they object, if we suggest the possibility of another true history, in a country adjoining to Egypt, having been made to furnish a religious allegory for the dramas at Eleusis.

Mr. Wise has observed, that Bacchus was twice born, (which Diodorus refers to the fruits of the earth being destroyed in the flood of Deucalion, and springing up after it,) that he planted the vine, made wine, and was overtaken by the power of it; where we have evident traces of the patriarch Noah. Again, he has noticed, after Vossius, that Bacchus was



born in Egypt, that he had two mothers, was exposed upon the waters in an ark or chest, was pictured horned, and was called the legislator; that he passed through the Red Sea, and that one of the Bacchæ of Euripides, by striking a rock with her Thyrsus, brought out water; in which some leading transactions in the life of Moses are clearly alluded to.—Again he observes, that Bacchus was termed Nebrodes, and Ζαγγελὺς, Nimrod the mighty hunter. (*Hist. and Chron. of the fabulous Ages*, p. 82. 3. 4.) With all these traditions and titles Iacchus had no concern; but we recognize in them a course of ancient history, and a collection of traditions borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures. Let the following be added, as a possible foundation for the story of Iacchus\*.

\* There is a very pleasing group of Ceres and Proserpine, with a figure of the young winged Iacchus alighting near the shoulder of the latter, in the library of Christ-church, Oxford. This interesting piece of antique sculpture, was brought from Pella, in Macedonia, in the year 1806, by the late Alexander Mackenzie, Esq. then a student of Christ-church, a learned young man of great worth and promise. He died soon after presenting the marble to his college.

Ceres, after she had quitted heaven, grieving for the loss of her daughter, accompanied by her young son Iacchus, sat down upon the stone of sorrow near the well Callichorus, where her thirst was allayed. I will omit the absurdity and indecency with which the fable is further disfigured\*, and enquire how this could be applied at Eleusis, to illustrate the noble doctrines which Mr. Ouvaroff, with much probability, has concluded were taught there.

\* And for which Iamblichus has furnished a very sensual apology. But the following extract from the *Prælectio* of the worthy Dr. Cook, prefixed to his edition of Aristotle, *de Poeticâ*, will shew the true cause of the introduction of them.

“Atqui his sordibus atque immunditatibus inerat religio—manca illa quidem ac depravata, ut ex purâ castâque quæ fuerat virgine, ad impudicitiam omnemque turpitudinem abjecta. Hæc autem fœda et probrosa facinora, lusus, lasciviæque, et promiscui marium cum fœminis congressus, quid aliud spectant, aut ad quam originem repeti atque accessi possunt, nisi ad notam illam ac præclaram *παλιγγενεσίαν*, expectatam videlicet per tot sæcula totius generis humani instaurationem, cujus instaurator atque perfector ipse homo factus futurus esset Deus.” P. xxi.

The story may perhaps be traced to Gerara or Idumæa, and therefore the Egyptians must have been aware of it. It occurs in the wanderings of the outcast Hagar with her son Ishmael; who, when exhausted with fatigue and thirst, was comforted by an angel, who shewed her, not indeed the well Callichorus, but a spring of living water, ὕδατος ζῶντος, as it is perhaps significantly expressed by the Septuagint: (Gen. c. xxi. v. 19.) evidently as an assurance to Ishmael, that however, as the son of the bondwoman, he was not chosen for the line of succession, he was by no means excluded from partaking of that well of life, which was to spring up in God's appointed time.

\* It is worthy of remark, that a temporal encouragement was added, Gen. c. xxi. v. 18, that Ishmael should be a great people; and Gen. c. xxv. v. 16, his children are designated twelve princes, the same in number as the heads of the favoured tribes.

*On the words τελετή and τέλειος.*

Mr. Ouvaroff has suggested, that one of the great objects of the mysteries was, the presenting to fallen man the means of his return to God. These means were the cathartic virtues\*, by the exercise of which a corporeal life was to be vanquished. Accordingly the mysteries were termed τελεταὶ, perfections, because they were supposed to induce a perfectness of life. Those who were purified by them were styled τελουμένοι and τετελεσμένοι, that is, brought εἰς τὸ τέλειον, to perfection; which depended on the exertions of the individual. In an attempt that I formerly made to elucidate the nature of the Eleusinian shows, I ventured to conclude, that the doctrines of them were explained by means of transparent scenes†, and that these had been faithfully

\* Dissertation of Mr. Taylor.

† Somewhat like the dramatic representations in the island of Java, consisting of “scenic shadows, in which the

copied upon the painted Greek vases; which were accordingly deposited in tombs, to evidence the faith of the deceased. It gave me occasion to notice from Plutarch, that the votaries of Isis professed to think of the deity, as of their sacred veils; that his nature was partly dark and partly light and brilliant, in other words, that it could only be imperfectly comprehended. In a very remarkable passage in the Epistle of St. James, it is said, that God is the Father of Lights, and that in him is neither variableness nor shadow of turning: where the words *lights* and *shadow* seem to allude to those heathen means of religious improvement. But the words of the apostle appear directed to the doctrines, as well as to

several heroes of the drama, represented in diminutive size, are made to perform their entrances and exits behind a transparent curtain." The subjects of these, it is said, are taken from the ancient religious poems, the *B'rata Yud'ha*, or Holy War, and the *Romo* or *Rama*.

See a discourse delivered to the Literary and Scientific Society at Java, Sept. 10, 1815, by the Hon. T. S. Raffles, president, published in Valpy's Pamphleteer, No. 15.

the mysterious shows of the Pagans. For, as in them, perfection was to be obtained by the efforts of the individual exercising himself in the cathartic virtues; the inspired teacher shews, that such advancement was only really attainable by the gift of God.

“ Πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ, καὶ πᾶν δῶρημα τέλειον ἄνωθεν ἔστι, καταβαῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, παρ’ ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγή, ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα.” c. i. v. 17.

“ Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Where *τέλειον*, *perfect*, is the very word used by the Pagans to express the object of their mysteries. Hence I would infer, that *δόσις ἀγαθὴ*, good gift, must denote temporal blessings, and *δῶρημα τέλειον*, spiritual graces\*; and with these I should presume to accept the

\* See Locke on 1 Cor. c. ii. v. 6. ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, amongst them that are perfect. “Perfect,” says Locke, “here is the same with spiritual.” The words ἐν τοῖς τελείοις—ἐν μυστηρίῳ—τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην used, by St. Paul, seem all to be applied to the initiated Pagans.

word *φῶς*, lights, in a much more exalted sense than Schleussner in his Lexicon has assigned to the word, with reference to this passage.

The books of the Old and the New Covenant best interpret each other: accordingly, this passage of St. James elucidates the nature of the Urim and Thummim, in the prophetic breast-plate of the Jewish high priest, (in *Levit.*), which Dean Prideaux properly determined to be the divine power given to the breast-plate in its consecration; “for Urim signifieth *light*, and Thummim *perfection*\*.” Thus, when the Almighty directed in what manner the vestments of the high priest should be made, he commanded Moses to place in the breast-plate the Urim and Thummim, *Exod. c. xxviii. v. 30.*: when the workmen however executed their work, no mention of these occurs; *Exod. c. xxxix. v. 21.*, for they were not to be inserted by human hands. But when Moses consecrates Aaron and invests him, he adds the Urim and Thummim, by virtue of

\* Connection, vol. i. p. 215.

his commission from the Almighty. Levit. c. viii. v. 8.

These Urim and Thummim, then, were spiritual gifts imparted from the Father of lights. They implied, that whenever the high priest fastened on the sacred breast-plate, he was spiritually and divinely illuminated, and permitted to look into futurity, as far as regarded the immediate purpose of enquiry into the Divine Will. To this I will lastly add, that the Urim and Thummim of Christians is the Gospel. And I cannot better conclude my remarks on the subject of Mr. Ouvaroff's speculations, than by illustrating what I have recently adduced, in the words of the excellent Stanhope :—

“The great ends which God seems to have intended the doctrine of his Gospel should serve, are the *enlightening* our minds, and *purifying* our natures; letting us into a nearer view of a future state, and the incommunicable *perfections* of the Divine Nature; and bringing us to a better likeness of those that are communicable.”

and again :—

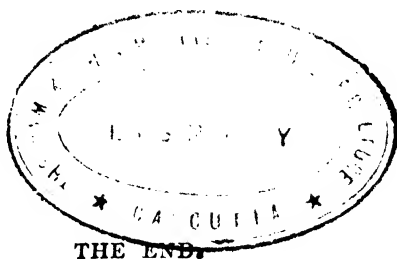
“The exalting, I mean, and purifying our nature, and



so rendering us more like God, in those of his *perfections* which may and ought to be imitated by us\*.”

\* Paraphrase and Comment on the Epistles and Gospels,  
Vol. 1. p. 181.

J. CHRISTIE.











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